Petron, Shell to hike oil prices again by up to 55¢

Story on PAGE A2

Bicam approves bill on absentee voting

By Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

THE BICAMERAL conference committee endorsed Wednesday night the final draft of the proposed law on absentee voting that will allow some seven million overseas Filipinos to vote in national elections starting in 2004.

BICAM/A17

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IN *Saturday Special*

SMART allures this February. For details, see mega spread, C2.

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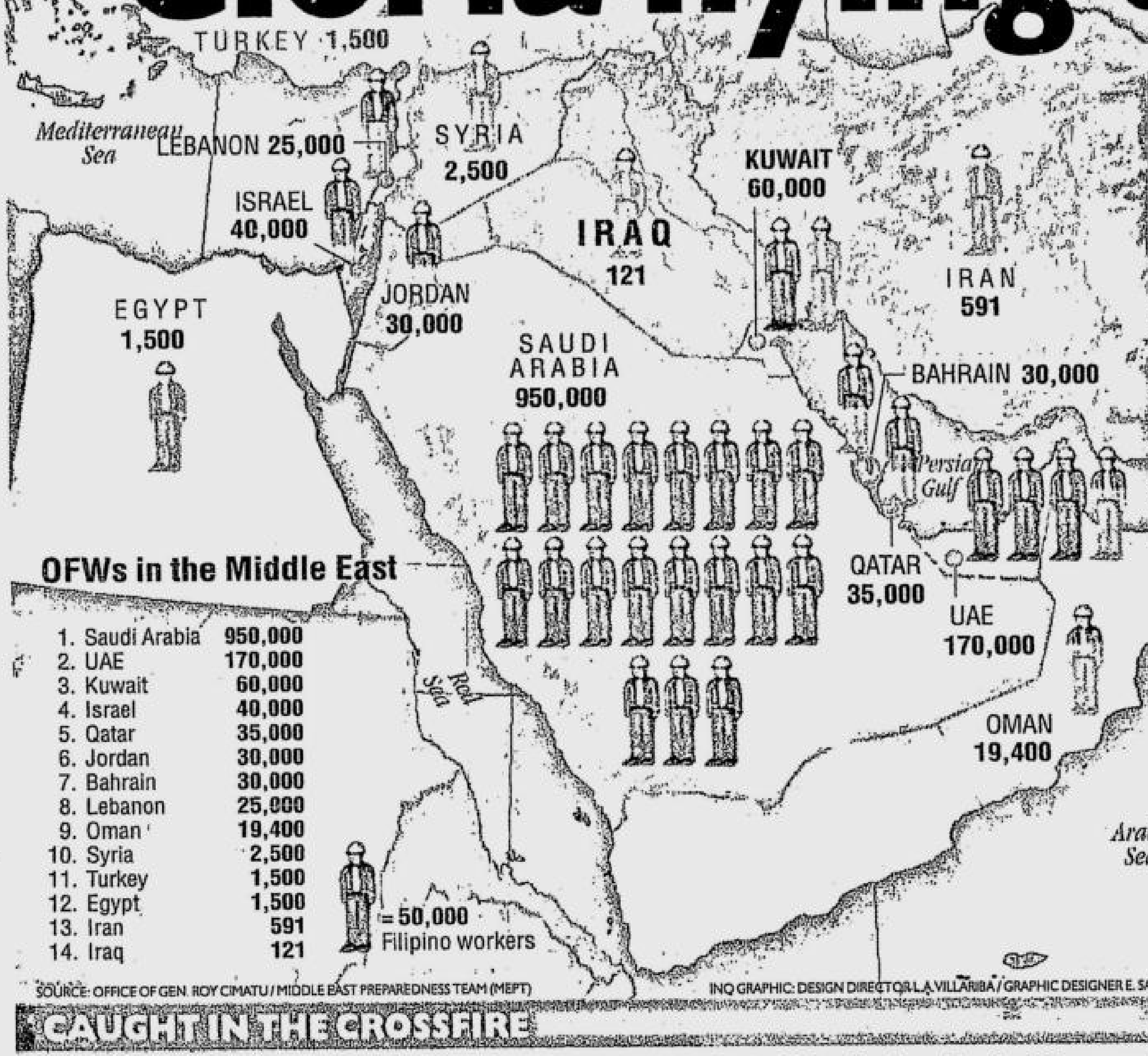
Gloria flying to Kuwait



OFWs in the Middle East

1.	Saudi Arabia	950,000
2.	UAE	170,000
3.	Kuwait	60,000
4.	Israel	40,000
5.	Qatar	35,000
6.	Jordan	30,000
7.	Bahrain	30,000
8.	Lebanon	25,000
9.	Oman	19,400
10.	Syria	2,500
11.	Turkey	1,500
12.	Egypt	1,500
13.	Iran	591
14.	Iraq	121

SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEN. ROY CIMATU / MIDDLE EAST PREPAREDNESS TEAM (MEPT)

INQ GRAPHIC: DESIGN DIRECTOR L.A. VILLARIBA / GRAPHIC DESIGNER E. SAMBO / ARTIST S.BRAVO

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

1,365,612 overseas Filipino workers deployed in the Middle East will be displaced by the US war against Iraq.

EVACUATION TEAM. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes (right) and Air Force chief Nestor Santillan (extreme left) wish the crew with co-pilot Lt. Rowena Ayudan Godspeed.

ROGER MARGALLO

Sudden, no-frills trip to show her concern for war-jittery OFWs

By Dona Z.Pazzibugan and Norman Bordadora

"TO SHOW her personal concern," for the overseas Filipino workers, President Macapagal-Arroyo will fly to war-jittery Kuwait at 5 a.m. Sunday morning for an overnight visit. She is scheduled to return on Tuesday.

Kuwait, home to 60,000 OFWs, is certain to be a target of neighbor Iraq's retaliation as the oil-rich nation provides a base for an increasingly critical mass of US troops.

Without frills and the usual bloated entourage, the President will travel non-stop aboard a 10-seater private plane for the seven-hour flight to Kuwait. She will be billeted at the Sheraton Hotel.

"As the situation is slowly deteriorating, the President is determined to show our countrymen in the region that the Philippine government, through its various agencies, is very much aware of the needs and concerns of our workers and that the government is ready to respond to them," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said that the President will meet with the Kuwaiti Emir to seek assurance for the safety of Filipino workers.

At press time, the President had instructed an aide to locate the daughter of the previous Kuwaiti Emir, who had been her good friend.

Ople said that the President will also personally asked for-

GLORIA/A18

Guingona leads anti-war protest

By Philip Tubeza and Norman Bordadora

AT A MULTI-FAITH prayer rally in historic Plaza Miranda in Manila yesterday, Vice President Teofisto Guingona led a crowd of at least 3,000—many of them Muslim—in opposing a US-led war against Saddam Hussein.

During the "National Day of Prayer Against War on Iraq," seven Muslim groups issued a strong statement, saying "an attack on Iraq means war to the Muslim world."

"No doubt, President Bush delivered a 'war speech' (during his State of the Union Address) against Iraq, the Muslim Ummah and to the rest of the world, (leading) to the third world war," the groups said.

An even stronger warning was raised in Mati, Davao Oriental, when the ranking leader of a moderate Muslim group said the Macapagal administration's support for the US policy on Iraq could turn into a nightmare for Filipinos.

Mohammed Ali Hanapia Manuel, Al Haj, vice president of the Ulama League of the Philippines, urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to withdraw her support for the United States because this could further enrage fundamentalist Muslims.

"The Philippine government's support for the US-led war on Iraq will mean a big disaster to the country. We can expect more bombings throughout the country if the trend continues and many more innocent civilians will be killed," Manuel predicted.

In Plaza Miranda, Guingona asked for divine intervention to stop the coming bloodshed.

"Dear God in heaven, help stem the blood that shall be loosened and enlighten those with passionate intensity to do their worst," Guingona said.

Guingona also prayed for the safety of the country's overseas contract workers in the volatile region.

"We have almost a million Filipino workers in the Middle East. We pray for their safety and the security of those who may fall in the night should this conflagration come," he said.

Guingona expressed hope that

GUINGONA/A18

ERIK ARAZAS

THE IRAQIS among us, like the Iraq Embassy's Shwaiki family, join the multi-faith prayer rally in Plaza Miranda in Manila on Friday.

Bush warns: Disarming Iraq to take only weeks

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush has warned that efforts to disarm Baghdad peacefully will end in "weeks, not months."

Bush welcomed the idea of exile for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to end the showdown, but said the goal of disarming Baghdad remains the same regardless of who is in charge of the Iraqi government.

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage meanwhile said the US would have access to 21 countries and another 20 countries were committed to allow US overflights should Washington go to war.

Bush said the window for a diplomatic end for Iraq to comply with disarmament demands will not be open for long.

"This is a matter of weeks not months. For the sake of peace this issue must be resolved. Hopefully it can be done peacefully," Bush said.

Armitage brought the same message to the Senate Foreign Relations panel. He said that with the US troop buildup in the Gulf reaching critical mass, Saddam did not have much time left to disarm peacefully.

BUSH/A18

Now, Gloria wants amnesty for loose guns

By Carlito Pablo and Cynthia Balana

AFTER brandishing the stick, the President yesterday offered gun owners an appetizing carrot. President Macapagal-Arroyo launched a new amnesty program for owners of unlicensed firearms, only a day after banning civilians from carrying firearms outside their homes.

The ban, the most drastic step to curb the country's entrenched gun culture in three decades, won praise from many, including an unlikely duo: opposition Senators Panfi-

NOW/A7

Rizal enshrined in China as gift to RP

By Chelo Banal-Formoso
Lifestyle Editor

A NEW YEAR'S gift from the People's Republic of China to the Philippines "is a great symbol of the 1,000-year-old friendship between our two nations," House Speaker Jose de Venecia remarked during the inauguration of the Rizal Park on Jan. 23 in the Siongque village of Jinjiang City, Fujian province in China.

De Venecia, who headed the Philippine delegation, further said that, "This Rizal Park in China helps elevate the status of our Philippine national hero Dr. Jose Rizal as a hero for the whole Asian region."

The Rizal statue is enshrined in a 5-hectare park built and named in his honor. And the monument made of the world-famous Jinjiang granite stones, stands at 18.61 meters high, taller than

RIZAL/A19

Rebel gov't dispenses swift justice

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—A shadow government composed of members of the Communist Party of the Philippines openly exists alongside the governing barangay in a remote village in the Bondoc Peninsula.

As in most villages under the control of the CPP and its armed wing the New People's Army, the Ganap na Samahang Masa (GSM) commands not only respect but also fear. It wields far stronger political and judicial authority than the elected barangay officials because it rules on the life or death of any resident who runs afoul of existing laws, whether of the legitimate government or of the rebel movement.

"The GSM is the true governing body

REBEL/A18

STAYIN' ALIVE FOR CHA-CHA!

JDV: I'm alive, dancing Cha-cha

By Christine O. Avendaño

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia is very much alive, and so is the move in the House of Representatives to amend the Constitution.

"(I'm) strong as a bull. (I'm) ready to go back to work, do the

JDV/A17

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/01/03

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Coudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Petron, Shell to hike prices anew

By Ronnel W. Domingo

OIL majors Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. will be increasing petroleum product prices by Monday, and would likely match the 45 to 55 centavos per liter hike announced by the third oil giant Caltex Phil. last week, industry sources said yesterday.

Petron and Shell officials would not confirm nor deny this, saying they would be making announcements at the right time.

Officials of new oil players said they would wait to see what Shell and Petron decide to do.

In a statement, consumer welfare advocate Raul Concepcion said pump prices could be expected to go up by as much as 80 centavos per liter on the third week of February.

Concepcion, who chairs the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said the rate of increase was based on a $2.14-increase per barrel of crude oil.

Dubai crude averaged $27.87 per barrel in January, up from $25.73 in December.

In addition, the peso weakened by 8 centavos, from P53.49 to the dollar in December to P53.57 last month, Concepcion said.

He said he expected the major oil companies to implement the price hikes on the week starting Feb. 17, when they start refining the crude that had been bought at higher prices.

Concepcion said Caltex would be expected to raise prices by 15 centavos to 20 centavos per liter only, as it had already adjusted prices last week.

On Jan. 24, Caltex hiked prices of gasoline by 55 centavos and of diesel and kerosene by 45 centavos. This was the third price increase announced by Caltex within a month.

Caltex officials cited the steep rise in regional raw materials and product prices over the past few weeks.

Gasoline prices went up on Jan. 18 by 60 centavos per liter, blamed in part on the cost of complying with the stricter requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Before that, the oil companies had announced a hike of 49 centavos per liter of gasoline, diesel and kerosene on Jan. 3.

Concepcion also said the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board was not expected to grant a transport fare hike until the middle of March.

He said the transport groups' petition for a fare hike would only be submitted after Petron and Shell had each announced their price increases and even then, the petition would have to undergo a series of public hearings.

Bishop likely to get away with a confession

By Armand N. Nocum

THE ANTIPOLO bishop who allegedly fathered a child is likely to get away with a confession and a temporary prohibition from saying Mass.

A Church official explained that in the eyes of the Church, what Bishop Crisostomo Yalung had committed was not a "really grave offense involving a criminal act."

Some Church officials even raised the possibility that Yalung, 49, who resigned after reportedly fathering a child last year, could have been a victim of extortionists.

They said that when news of Yalung's resignation spread late last year, there were fears that the woman he had gotten involved with may have only been after some money.

"That was the impression then. We have to look into that," one of them said.

The first official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a reported gag on Church officials, said that under canonical laws, having an affair with a woman or fathering a child was more of a "personal sin, a matter of morals."

"If it is a legal offense, then he is liable to the justice system and the Church has no jurisdiction on the matter," the official said in a telephone interview.

But if the offense involved "sexual abuse" or "molestation," then the offended parties are free to file criminal cases against Yalung, the official said.

Asked whether the offense would merit removal from the priesthood, the official said it did not so long as Yalung confessed his sins and did penance for it. He must also provide for the financial needs of the child.

"He will go to hell if he does not confess," the official said.

It was not clear whether Yalung, a noted theological scholar and writer, would remain a bishop. But he remains a priest because according to Church precepts, one who is ordained into the priesthood remains a priest forever.

The source said the most serious penalty that Yalung could suffer was for the Vatican to strip him of some of his "faculties" such as a temporary prohibition from saying Mass.

"One who says Mass should be without sin," the source said. "That he must face. To a priest, that is the ultimate punishment. Imagine, remaining a priest but unable to say Mass?"

Yalung may also be asked to do. reparations, the official said.

Filipino Catholics have been clamoring for the Church hierarchy to impose stronger punishments on erring priests.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines meanwhile has denied that it had received instructions from the Vatican or the Apostoloic Nuncio Antonio Franco to refrain from discussing the case of Yalung.

In a statement, CBCP President Archbishop Orlando Quevedo said "it would be totally presumptuous for the CBCP or any Bishop to make speculative comments on an issue we do not have full and direct knowledge about."

Youth don't see 'community' in Church, says study

By Armand Nocum

THE CATHOLIC Filipino youth has come to view Churches as grand buildings of worship.

This was the finding of a study made by a panel of the Catholic Bishops Coneference of the Philippines, which also showed that the youth generally favor the Church taking a stand on social issues.

A study done by the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on Youth showed that of the 1,070 youths polled, 81.8 percent saw the church "foremost as a house of God," but only few viewed her as a community.

"The Filipino Catholic youth perceive the church primarily as a building—which is quite far from what she proclaims about herself as a community," said the study, which was conducted last year.

The study also said that only 12.9 of the Catholic youth see the church as a "servant of the poor and the oppressed."

"All in all, the church is considered less as a community of people, than a place or structure, where the youth are able to pray and obtain salvation," the study said.

However, inspite of these feelings, the CBCP youth panel found that 88.3 of the Filipino youth feel that they belong to the church.

Yes, I'm ready, says Loren; Barbers bats for Danding

By Delfin Mallari Jr., *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*, and Carla Gomez, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

"YES. I'm ready," was Sen. Loren Legarda's seemingly forthright reply to questions from reporters in Lucena City.

However, the senator who is being touted as either a presidential or vice presidential candidate in 2004 quickly qualified her statement which she said might be misinterpreted.

"I'm not saying that I'm ready for anything. What I mean is that I'm ready to serve," she said laughing.

Legarda was in Lucena on Friday as a guest of the Quezon Catholic Schools Association. She also appeared at a convention of Quezon public school teachers.

Legarda said there was nothing wrong with young people aspiring for higher office.

"I'm 43, there is nothing wrong. I don't think age or my youth will be a disadvantage," the senator said.

"It's about time (we) elect a young President," she said, quoting former President Ramos.

She said she was ready to serve in any position or capacity, even as a reelectionist senator.

She told her audience that she would reveal her political plans before the end of the year.

In Bacolod City, a leader of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD) said yesterday business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco would get the support of the members of the administration party if he agrees to run for president in 2004.

"If Cojuangco agrees to run for president, all of us will support him," Barbers told reporters.

Asked whom he meant by "all of us," Barbers answered: "all of us in the Lakas, the Lakas party members."

Barbers said it would not be out of the ordinary if Lakas members supported Cojuangco since there was an existing coalition between Lakas and the Cojuangco-founded Nationalist People's Coalition.

Barbers was in Bacolod to speak at a convention of the Philippine Association of Water Districts Inc.

Barbers, however, said that because he was a party man, he would support whoever would be drafted as a standard bearer by the Lakas-CMD.

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AN AMERICAN soldier gets ready for a parachute jumping exercise in Clark, Pampanga. DENNIS SABANGAN

RP protests 'excessive use of force'

Indon diplomat summoned over arrest of 49 Filipino fishermen

FOREIGN Secretary Blas Ople yesterday summoned an Indonesian diplomat to protest "excessive use of force" after the Indonesian navy sank four Philippine boats allegedly fishing illegally in Indonesian waters.

Indonesian authorities on Monday arrested 49 Filipino fishermen after sinking their boats as they tried to flee a patrol frigate off Sulawesi island, Indonesian Rear Adm. I Wayan Argawa said.

"I particularly emphasized our displeasure and grave concern over the excessive use of force employed by the Indonesian navy," Ople said in a statement after meeting with Indonesian Charge d'Affaires Alexander Laturiuw.

Ople said the fishermen did not present any danger to Indonesia, and were not involved in smuggling or trafficking.

"We were able to deal with similar situations in the past without the use of deadly force," he said.

He said he was assured that the Indonesian government "will do all it can to return our fishermen," and that the issue of reparation for the boats will be discussed later.

Philippine consular officials have visited the fishermen and have reported they are in good condition, the statement said.

The northern tip of Sulawesi island is about 400 kilometers south of Mindanao.

US Marines, RP soldiers begin war games today

CLARK, Pampanga—At least 634 United States Marines are joining 418 Filipino troops in a 28-day Marine interoperability exercise (Marinex 03) which starts today at Clark and Cavite.

The US participants in the latest exercise will bring to 1,200 the number of US soldiers in Luzon this month.

Some 500 troops from the US Army and Air Force are participating in the three-week Balance Piston 03-5, the first in a series of joint military exercises with the US military.

Balance Piston began here last Monday and at the Fort Magsaysay Army base in Nueva Ecija.

The Marinex, which will run until Feb. 28, is being held mainly at the Marine training base of the Philippine Marine Corps at Sangley Point, Cavite.

This is the first time that two war games are being held almost simultaneously in Luzon.

An official described the Marinex as a light infantry and reconnaissance training exercise that will involve conducting conventional and special operations exercises.

US troops have been banned from leaving the venues of the exercises because of threats from communist rebel activities.

Master Sgt. Michael Farris, US spokesperson of the Balance Piston, has reiterated that the presence of US troops in the Philippines was not in preparation for an expected US attack on Iraq. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Indon diplomat expresses regret over boat sinking

By Norman Bordadora

THE INDONESIAN charge d'affaires yesterday expressed regret and shock over the sinking of four Filipino fishing boats off Sulawesi Island.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, however, said that Indonesian charge d'affaires Alexander Naturiuw reserved the right to return with his government's official position on the matter in the next few days.

"He expressed deep regret and shock over the incident and he hopes that this incident will not be repeated," Ople said.

"Our fishermen said that they were not shot at sea but when they were already about to go to shore," Ople said.

Education dep't to test teachers on English proficiency—De Jesus

PUBLIC school teachers are to be tested to determine if they can implement President Macapagal-Arroyo's order that English be the sole medium of instruction, a senior aide said Friday.

An estimated 450,000 teachers will be required to take English proficiency tests, probably starting in February, Department of Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus told reporters.

Arroyo has said Filipinos should be proficient in English to be globally competitive.

At present, both English and Pilipino, the national dialect, are used inside classrooms and in textbooks and other instructional materials.

De Jesus conceded that despite Philippine boasts of English mastery, there was an "English problem."

He also sought to assure teachers that those who flunk the tests would not necessarily lose their jobs.

The main purpose of the tests is to correct and remedy shortcomings, de Jesus said. *AFP*

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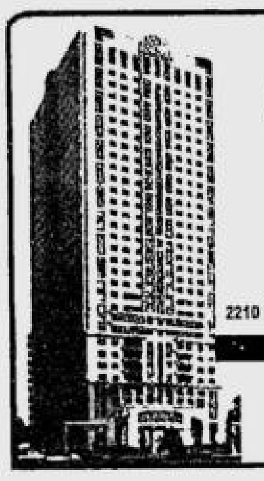

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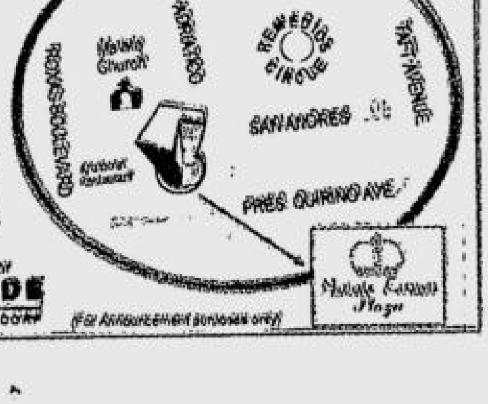

(For Announcement purposes only)

Judge defends decision in P2-B shabu case: Blame the police

By Volt Contreras

THE JUDGE whose November 2002 ruling led to the release of 10 persons, seven of them undocumented Chinese nationals, all linked to the operation of an alleged drug laboratory, has issued a press statement strongly defending his decision.

'The court regrets that the (drug trafficking) suspects have to be set free but the law must be followed and our law enforcers must be the first one to abide by the law. The end can never justify the means."

Last week, Interior Secretary Jose Lina lodged an administrative complaint before the Supreme Court against Leachon, who presides over Branch 224 of the QC Regional Trial Court.

Lina denounced the ruling as "maliciously illegal" and based on "doubtful, erroneous and technical grounds."

The country stands to be the "Colombia of Asia . . . if the trend continues," he warned.

But in a press statement which Leachon said he had to issue to shield his family from "malicious insinuations," the judge explained the major grounds he considered in dismissing the drug cases.

First, the two search warrants police had obtained from the Manila Regional Trial Court for the July 18, 2002 raid of two residences in Loyola Heights, Quezon City were "fatally defective."

Citing Rule 126 of the 2002 Rules of Criminal Procedure, he said warrants should come from the court with "territorial jurisdiction" over the suspected crime. In this case, police should have applied for the warrants in the Quezon City, not Manila.

Obtaining warrants from any other court is allowed if the applicant presented "compelling reasons" for doing so before the court with primary jurisdiction.

"Evidence gathered from that illegal search cannot be accepted in court under the Constitution," he said.

Leachon was alluding to the drug ingredients, manufacturing equipment, and finished samples estimated to be all worth P2 billion, which police claimed to have seized from one of the raided houses.

Second, Leachon said, the informant, a certain Roberto Sanchez whose statements were used to obtain the warrants in Manila, was a no-show in Leachon's sala during its hearings on the motion to quash search warrants filed by seven of the 10 accused.

Sanchez had claimed in his affidavit presented to the Manila RTC that he was a houseboy working for two of the suspects, Jimmy Chua and Sally Ong, and that he saw his employers sell shabu to their Chinese visitors.

But when Leachon subpoenaed Sanchez, the address Sanchez gave in his affidavit turned out to be a "vacant lot" used as a depot by an adjacent hardware store.

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Joma calls GMA, Cabinet execs 'ignoramuses in international law'

By Agnes E. Donato and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

EXILED communist leader Jose Ma. Sison yesterday called President Macapagal-Arroyo and top Cabinet officials "ignoramuses in international law" for demanding that he be extradited from the Netherlands.

Sison pointed out in a statement that there was no extradition treaty between the Philippines and the Netherlands.

The founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines added that as a recognized political refugee he was protected by Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

This meant that he cannot be expelled to a country "where I would be subjected to torture, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment," said Sison who is based in the Dutch city of Utrecht.

He said Ms Macapagal, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Interior Secretary Jose Lina and Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye "have made fools of themselves on a global scale."

The President and her officials said the other day that there might now be a valid reason for the Dutch government to surrender Sison despite the lack of an extradition treaty as he was facing criminal charges in the Philippines.

Sison is being charged with murder, among others, for the killing last week of former New People's Army chief Romulo Kintanar and for the 2001 murder of former Cagayan legislator Rodolfo Aguinaldo.

Yesterday, Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez said the government could request the surrender of Sison even without the filing of murder charges, if this would not be required by the Netherlands government.

The requirements were less stringent in a request of surrender based on comity, or respect for the requesting "friendly" state, she said.

Ople said on Thursday the Dutch secretary of state for European affairs, Atzo Nicolai, had promised cooperation after he was assured by Ople that Sison would be treated fairly in the Philippine justice system if he was surrendered.

Gutierrez said that the situation would have been different if there had been an extradition treaty, which would require that murder charges should have already been filed and arrest warrants against Sison issued before a request can be made.

Bunye said Malacañang was considering using as a model Kuala Lumpur's handing over of Moro National Liberation chair Nur Misuari who escaped to Malaysia after allegedly leading a failed armed uprising of his followers two years ago.

But Sison claimed his situation was different from that of Misuari who was deported to the Philippines in January 2002 after he was arrested and detained in Malaysia for allegedly violating that country's immigration laws.

He said that unlike him, Misuari had no legal protection at the time.

"My Philippine lawyers in the Public Interest Law Center can easily debunk these charges in any serious investigation," Sison said, adding that the charges were "patently false and so clearly politically motivated."

"The fabrication of the murder charges against me once more exposes the regime's malicious practice of filing charges of common crimes, instead of the charge of simple rebellion, against revolutionaries," he said.

He said this violated the Amado V. Hernandez doctrine and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law that had been signed by the government and the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the CPP.

In a ruling, now known as the Hernandez doctrine, the Supreme Court said that in a case for rebellion, all other acts committee—such as murder, homicide or arson—in the pursuit of a political objective are deemed included in the rebellion charge.

Sen. Loren Legarda yesterday called for a "moratorium or cessation" of hostilities between the government forces and NPA rebels to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of the peace talks.

"The military should temporarily stop the offensives and the NPA to also do the same and also stop the assassinations," Legarda said during a visit to Lucena City yesterday.

The senator said the recent declaration of the CPP-NPA and Sison as terrorists had become a stumbling block to the resumption of the talks.

"Its hard to conduct negotiations for peace while you other hand is pointing to the other party as a terrorist," she said.

She urged the government and the NDF to explore the combination of back-channeling and formal peace talks.

Ms Macapagal approved last week a comprehensive peace agreement to end the insurgency. Chief negotiator Silvestre Bello III was slated to present the draft to the NDF negotiating panel soon.

But an NDF spokesperson said from Utrecht that the government panel had not given any formal notice regarding Bello's trip to its NDF counterpart.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal has rejected the President's announced draft agreement.

NDF spokesperson Fidel Agcaoili said it agreed with Rosal's stand which he explained was really in reaction to on an earlier draft that Speaker Jose de Venecia, Gen. Eduardo Ermita and Bello had presented to the NDF in November 2001. He said the earlier draft asked for the capitulation of the revolutionary movement and the surrender of firearms of the NPA which, he said, should be rejected.

"For sure, we will study the draft that will be offered by the peace panel. But like Ka Roger, the NDF has also the same observation that it will not differ with the November draft," Agcaoili added. *With a report from Donna S. Cueto*

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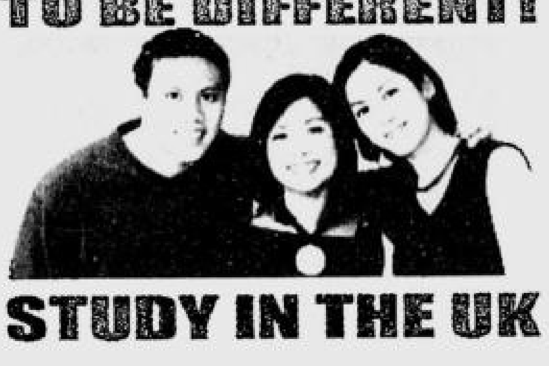

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Police to file charges vs 2 gov't employees tied to Kintanar slay

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE will file charges against two government employees who allegedly set up former New People's Army leader Romulo Kintanar for assassination inside a restaurant in Quezon City last week, officials said yesterday.

The two employees met with NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal at an office near the Quezon Memorial Circle three days before Kintanar's killing, said Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, head of the Task Force Kintanar.

"The course of our investigation has pointed to them as accomplices in the murder. Just an accomplice, not as principal. They will be included in the complaint," Maganto said during a press forum at the Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City.

"They were the ones who set up Rolly to eat in that area, something like that. That's the findings of our investigation."

The pair, whom he declined to identify except to say that they were "left-leaning," had been invited for questioning, and denied participation in the killing.

Kintanar was gunned down inside a Japanese restaurant at the Quezon Memorial Circle on Jan. 23 by NPA cadres for his "supposed sins" against the communist movement.

Maganto said Rosal would be charged as a principal in the case, among others, for "masterminding" the killing of Kintanar. It was Rosal who admitted that the NPA carried out the ambush of Kintanar.

He declined to name the other respondents, saying it would be up to police intelligence officials and investigators to identify the other culprits.

Police had tagged the NPA hit squad, the National Special Operations Group, in Kintanar's assassination, and identified its two "hitmen" as Philip Limjoco and Bartolome Melchor.

Maganto said he was considering putting up a P1-million reward for any information leading to the capture of Rosal, but said he has yet to request the Office of the President to provide the necessary fund.

The national police had earlier offered P1-million reward for Rosal's capture.

Yuchengco briefs Pacific Forum on Asean war vs Islamist terrorism

AMBASSADOR Alfonso Yuchengco, Philippine permanent representative to the United Nations until end 2002, briefed the board of governors of the Pacific Forum on the Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia in a meeting held two weeks ago in Hawaii.

Pacific Forum is an international think-tank based in Honolulu. Its governors include former US National Society Adviser Brent Scowcroft, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, Admiral Ralph Cossa, who is the incumbent president, and Raymond Johnson, former chairman and CEO of Caltex Petroleum Corp.—Dallas. Mr. Henry Clark Jr., former Executive Vice President of Castle & Cook was also present.

Except for Kelly, who was on a visit to Korea and China at the time, the majority of the governors were on hand to hear Yuchengco's "situationer."

"For us in Southeast Asia, Oct. 12, 2002 was what Sept. 11, 2001 had been for America and the West," the Philippine diplomat said.

"The bombings in Bali—which killed nearly 200 young tourist—have awakened Southeast Asia to the threat of Islamic terrorism, which our leaders tended to minimize, because our variety of Islam had seemed more moderate than the Middle Eastern kind," Yuchengco said.

YUCHENGCO

He then traced the beginnings of Islam in this region which he said was introduced not by Arab armies but Sufi mystics starting in the middle of the 14th century.

Because of this, Southeast Asian Islam has adapted not only to Hinduism and Buddhism but to even older animist practices. This heterogeneity has enabled Southeast Asian Islam to adapt more easily to modernity than the orthodox Islam of the Middle East and of North Africa.

Thus, where middle-East secular nationalism of the post-colonial period had failed to deliver on their promise of bread and freedom, Southeast Asia leaders have brought their peoples more significant benefits.

With this as a background, Yuchengco then briefly touched on the Islamist movements in Southeast Asia, including the Muslim problem in the Philippines.

SC asked to evict Imelda guards

By Donna S. Cueto

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government yesterday sought the help of the Supreme Court to evict guards of former first lady Imelda Marcos at her ancestral mansion and resthouse in Olot, Tolosa, Leyte.

Because of two resolutions issued by the Sandiganbayan in February and August last year that ordered the PCGG to return to Mrs. Marcos her ancestral properties, the former first lady had hired security guards to secure the Olot compound.

But the PCGG questioned the two orders of the Sandiganbayan before the Supreme Court which then issued a temporary restraining order on Dec. 3, 2002, enjoining the Sandiganbayan and Mrs. Marcos from enforcing the resolutions.

The PCGG, however, could not evict the guards from the property, even when PCGG officials showed the Supreme Court TRO.

The security guards hired by Mrs. Marcos from Pemco security agency told the PCGG representatives that they would only leave the Olot property if ordered by Mrs. Marcos' lawyer Robert Sison.

Even when policemen came to help the PCGG to enforce the TRO, the guards still refused to leave.

"Again in order to avoid any violence, the PCGG did not attempt to take possession of the property and instead opted to file this motion," said the urgent motion filed by the PCGG through the Office of the Solicitor General yesterday.

Comelec may tap ROTC

By Blanche Rivera

TEACHERS may soon have the option not to serve in the 2004 elections.

The Commission on Elections said that it may tap students undergoing the Reserve Officers Training Corps to serve as the board of election inspectors (BEI) next year.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said that the Comelec was agreeable to the proposal by the Department of Education that teachers' participation in the polls be made optional.

Abalos said that the Comelec shared the DepEd's position on the changing role of teachers in general elections.

He said that the Comelec has in fact drafted a bill that would be submitted to Congress to give teachers the freedom to choose whether to serve or not.

"We need that (amendment) because the participation of teachers is mandated by law. They compose the BEI," Abalos said in an earlier press conference.

The Comelec chair added that it "may be better" for ROTC students to do the job, especially now that the counting and canvassing would be automated.

Gov't, Reds told: Respect rights

By Joselle R. Badilla
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Amnesty International has called on the government and the communist rebels to abide by the international conventions of war and respect human rights.

The call came amid an exchange of accusations between the two sides over the killing last week of the New People's Army's former top leader Romulo Kintanar.

In a statement posted in its website on Thursday, the London-based international rights group asked all parties in the conflict involving the Communist Party of the Philippines, its armed wing, the NPA, and government forces to "publicly pledge their respect for basic human rights and humanitarian principles."

The AI released the statement following "the deliberate killing" of Kintanar at the Kamameshi restaurant in Quezon City.

Kintanar was the chief of the NPA in the 1980s but reportedly broke away from the party in 1992. The CPP has claimed responsibility for his killing, attributing it to a special unit of the NPA.

The AI reminded all parties in the conflict to abide by Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which forbids governments and armed opposition groups "to torture, deliberately kill civilians taking no part in the fighting, to harm those who are wounded, captured or seeking to surrender, or to take hostages."

As this developed, the human rights group Karapatan-Southern Mindanao said it was inclined to believe that three suspected NPA members killed in an alleged encounter in Baganga, Davao Oriental, on Jan. 18 were victims of summary execution.

Karapatan said the autopsy findings of the National Bureau of Investigation here showed that one of the victims had been shot at close range.

The military reported that the three suspected rebels were killed during a clash in a remote village of Baganga on Jan. 18.

Maj. Nixon Fortes, commander of the Army's 8th Special Forces battalion, identified those killed as Rodel Andoy alias Wendy, the alleged team leader of the NPA's district guerrilla unit under Front Committee 15; Russel Tandog alias Jumar; and John Ambasan.

Fortes said the military also recovered a hand grenade and a handheld radio from the slain suspects.

But Karapatan said that based on its own investigation, the three alleged NPA rebels had been arrested on the afternoon Jan. 16 by members of the Army's 30th Special Forces company based in Sitio Bisay.

It cited an eyewitness account that Bobit Budadong, who was identified as John Ambasan in the military report, was riding on a motorcycle and was passing by Sitio Bisay when he was arrested by troops belonging to the company.

The witness recounted that Andoy and Tandog later drove into the village and were also arrested.

The military allegedly took them into a house where they were locked up with six other people.

Karapatan said residents, including those who had been locked up with the three suspected rebels, heard gunshots at around midnight and another gunfire at around 1 a.m. on Jan. 17.

But Fortes said Karapatan should prove its allegations.

"They have no proof. It was clearly stated by the operating troops that it was an encounter. In fact Andoy, whom they claimed was shot at close range, was also the one who led the public execution of Rene Manuawan, a paramilitary in Barangay Batiano on Jan. 3," Fortes said in a phone interview.

Manuawan was allegedly killed in front of his family.

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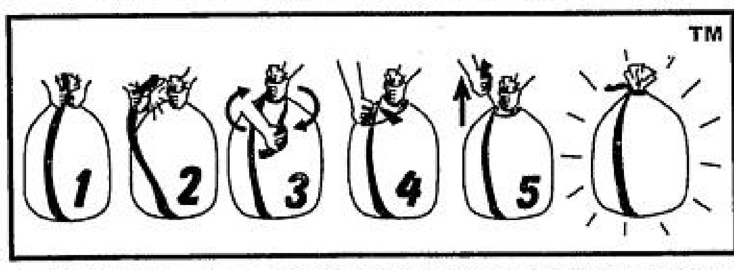

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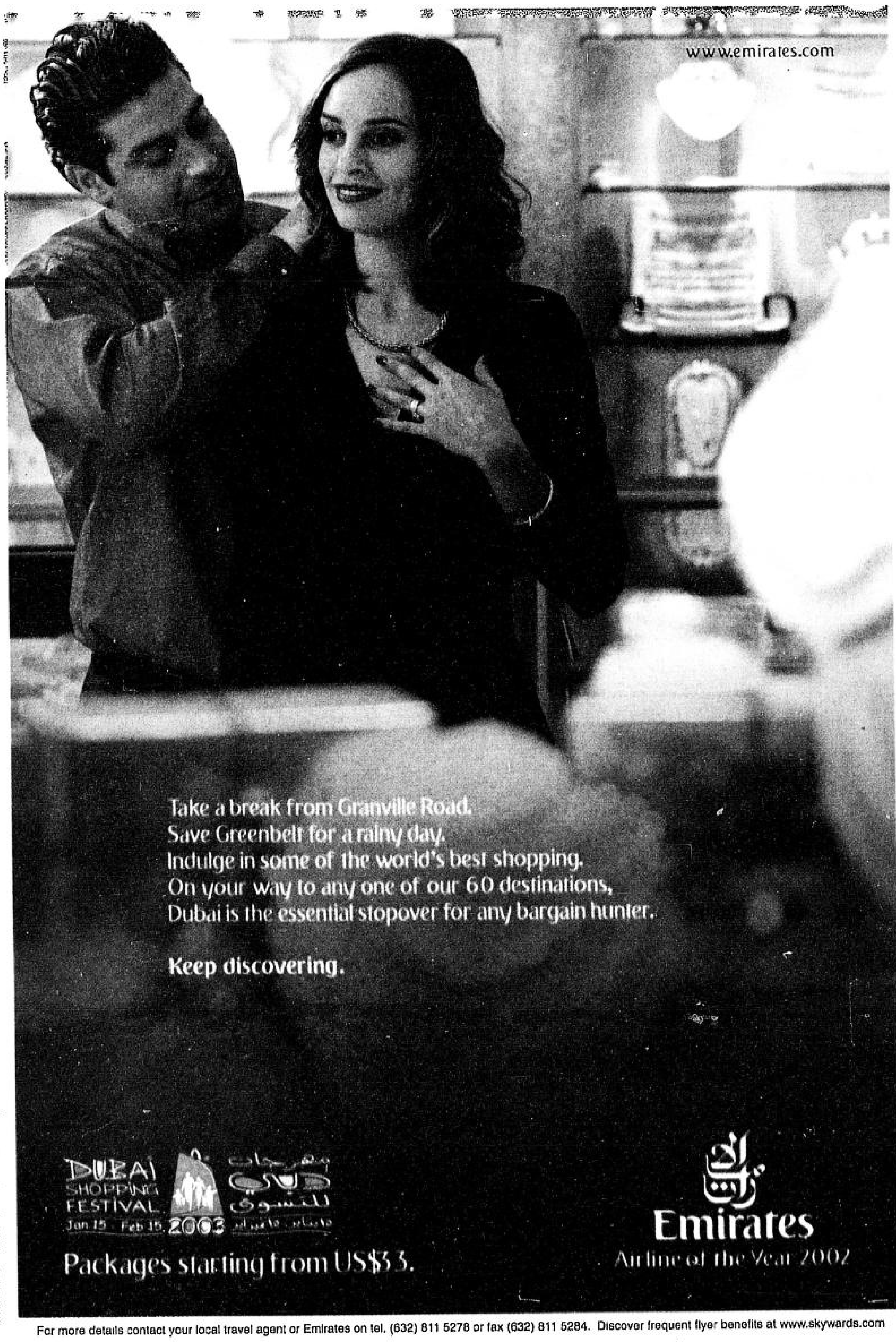
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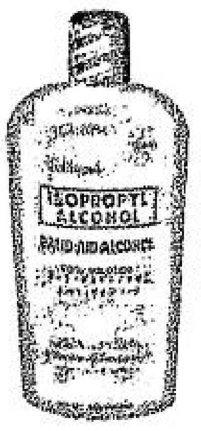

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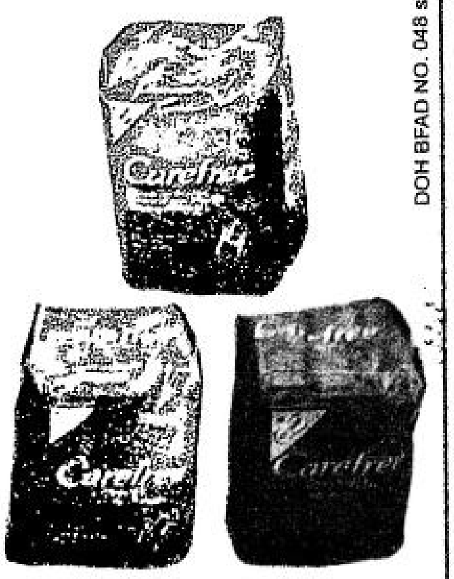

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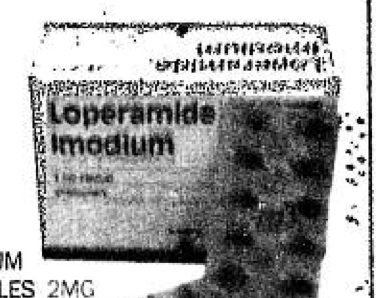

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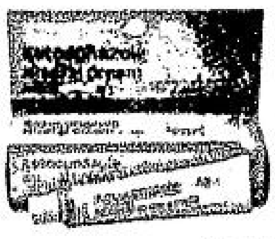

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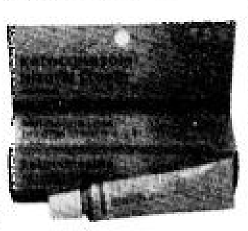

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DENR chief tells oil firms: Don't use Clean Air Act to justify hikes

By Volt Contreras

OIL companies cannot use the Clean Air Act to justify increases in diesel prices because the next round of toxicity control measures for this fuel type is still due in 2004, Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun yesterday said.

While CAA provisions reducing gasoline's aromatics and benzene content have already taken effect on Jan. 1, the mandated reduction of diesel's sulfur component will have to wait until Jan. 1 next year, she said.

In a press conference, she said some oil firms may have already factored in their compliance with the CAA in their recent move raising gasoline prices.

"But they cannot use Clean Air (as reason) to increase prices of diesel," she said.

Gozun also noted that so far the Department of Energy, in its inspection of gas stations nationwide, has yet to find a station that remains non-compliant with CAA.

RP to host Australasia legal forum

THE Philippine Judicial Academy (PJA) will host the first Australasian Judicial Educators Forum on Feb. 11 to 14. Twenty-one countries have been invited to attend the forum that is expected to draw experts in judicial education from all over the world.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. will formally open the conference with the special participation of the International Organization for Judicial Training that met in Jerusalem last year.

The Forum program includes observing an actual PJA training program.

The judicial academy, established in 1996, is headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Ameurfina A. Melencio-Herrera. She will preside over the sessions designed to institutionalize the exchange of resources for judicial education.

The other PJA officials are retired Supreme Court Justice Antonio Martinez, Vice Chancellor; Fr. Ranhilio C. Aquino, Academic Office; retired Deputy Court Administrator Bernardo T. Ponferrada, Judicial Reforms Office; Prof. Sedfrey Candelaria, Research and Linkages Office and retired RTC Judge Priscila S. Agana, executive secretary.

PJA has 12 departments: Civil Law, Justice Ricardo Puno; Constitutional Law, Dr. Pacifico Agabin; Criminal Law, Justice Romeo Callejo Sr.; Ethics and Judicial Conduct, Justice Hilarion Aquino; Remedial Law, Justice Oscar Herrera; Court Management, Justice Presbitero Velasco; Commercial Law, Prof. Cesar Villanueva; Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy, Fr. Ranhilio C. Aquino; International Law and Human Rights, former CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing; Court Technology, Atty. Ivan Uy; Research and Legal Method, Prof. Myrna Feliciano; and Special Areas of Concern, Atty. Antonio Dujua.

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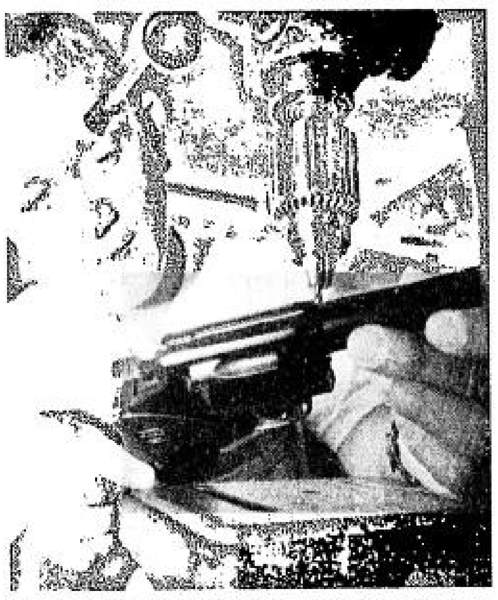
Gun owners assail ban as reckless, ill-advised



WORKER at the Arms Corp. in Marikina says the President's ban on civilians carrying guns outside their residences will certainly affect gun sales. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

By TJ Burgonio
and Christine Avendano

ADVOCATES of responsible gun ownership yesterday assailed the President's gun ban order—warning that this would leave civilians defenseless against gun-toting outlaws.

In the House, a lawmaker who leads two major target shooting clubs asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to reconsider her new policy given the current peace and order situation in the country.

Cagayan Rep. Jack Enrile said the gun ban on civilians was "ill-advised" and will only encourage criminals because the "only effective deterrent to crime against a person" has been removed.

Manny Molina, vice president of the Peaceful, Responsible Owners of Guns group (ProGun), also denounced the President's directive, calling it "reckless."

His group, which has 14,000 members, he said, is considering bringing a case before local courts to question the twin orders.

"Many bodies will be falling. Many civilians will be killed because they can't defend themselves against criminals," Molina said in a phone interview.

"Why are gun owners, who are mostly responsible, being penalized for the acts of irresponsible gun holders like in the Llamas' killing?" he added, referring to the man who shot dead Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas in Pasay City on Jan. 10 following a traffic altercation.

By Molina's estimates, licensed gun owners number around 750,000 nationwide.

Enrile said he backs the President's bid to fight crime in the streets but said that "stripping the law-abiding citizen of his wherewithal to defend himself when confronted with imminent danger is not the way to do it."

"The current peace and order situation in the country is such that the ordinary citizen is forced to go through the tedious and time consuming process of legally acquiring a firearm and lawfully securing a permit to carry the same for his personal protection," said Enrile, who is vice chair of the House committee on national defense.

He said that "none of us can really rely on the country's law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and security of each and every individual citizen."

Loose firearms

Enrile, son of former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, is chair of the Philippine Practical Shooting Association and regional chair of the International Practical Shooting Confederation.

In a statement, he said the government should look more into the problem of loose or unlicensed firearms in the country, citing the Department of Interior and Local Government records showing that, in the past 10 years, 85 percent of the 12,233 firearms involved in the commission of crimes were loose or unlicensed.

Molina stressed that the President's order was issued despite 2002 police figures indicating that only 7 percent of gun-related incidents were committed with the use of licensed firearms.

But in Camp Crame, Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., chief of the Philippine National Police, advised Pro-Gun officials to consult the police first before resorting to protest actions.

"I would suggest that they coordinate with us and that they refrain from making any mass actions because that would not be too good to them. That will be to their disadvantage," he told reporters.

"Remember that we are still in the process of preparing the implementing rules and regulations, and if they conduct these things, we might think otherwise."

Now, Gloria wants amnesty . . .

From page A1

lo Lacson and Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who said the order deserved the full support of Congress.

"It is high time for the President to exercise the resolve to minimize the (number of) guns on the streets," said Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police.

Malacañang released copies of Executive Order No. 171, dated Jan. 22, 2003, yesterday.

"It is consistent with the national interest that these loose firearms be submitted for licensing and the holders of loose firearms be encouraged and given an opportunity to obtain the required firearm license," the President said.

The government says illegal firearms are involved in about 85 percent of all gun-related crimes in the country.

Under EO 171, persons who possess unlicensed firearms "may surrender" their guns to the PNP "for custody and apply for the corresponding license."

Ms Macapagal said she was setting a one-year amnesty period, during which illegal gun owners would not be criminally prosecuted for as long as they turned in their weapons for documentation.

"As a general rule, high-powered rifles/*paltik* (home-made) firearms may not be allowed for licensing," Ms Macapagal said. "However, the PNP chief may allow the licensing of some high-powered firearms."

The order provides for a P3,000 amnesty fee for high-powered weapons and P2,000 for low-powered guns.

The President said that the registration of loose firearms would "undoubtedly increase the PNP Firearm Ballistics Data Bank and consequently, widen capabilities to investigate crimes committed with the use of firearms."

PNP chief Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane said the police would start arresting individuals who carry firearms outside their homes without a permit right away.

328,000 loose firearms

Lacson said that when he was still the PNP chief, he, too, tried to limit the number of civilian Permits to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFORs) to only those who faced serious threats to their lives.

He said that licensed firearms control was relaxed anew when he resigned the PNP post, mainly because of "open corruption" in the processing of licenses and PTCFORs.

Pimentel said the government should also step up the campaign against unlicensed or loose firearms.

"Guns kill people. We must create a society based on the rule of law, not the rule of the gun," he said.

Pimentel cited the report of Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina that there were at least 328,000 loose firearms in the country.

He said the PNP should take steps to encourage civilians to renew the permits of their guns whose licenses have already expired.

About 190,000 of these loose firearms were previously licensed but for one reason or another, their owners failed to renew their licenses, he said.

Lacson said that reports reaching his Senate office showed that a PTCFOR can be processed even without the applicant personally appearing before the PNP Firearms and Explosives Division and undergoing the required tests for a fee of P10,000.

He said this privilege has been abused and has become a lucrative source of income for corrupt officers.

In the House, another staunch oppositionist said he backed the President's decision "100 percent." Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen said that although he owns a gun—which he claimed was more often left at home than not—he was for a gunless society.

Dilangalen said that with too many loose firearms in the country, he was afraid the country "will never achieve genuine peace."

Gunless society

Anti-gun lobbyist Reynaldo "Nandy" Pacheco praised the President's order, even as he raised new proposals to disarm the country's gun culture.

The President, he said, should also ban gun shows inside public places like malls and instead limit such events to police and military camps.

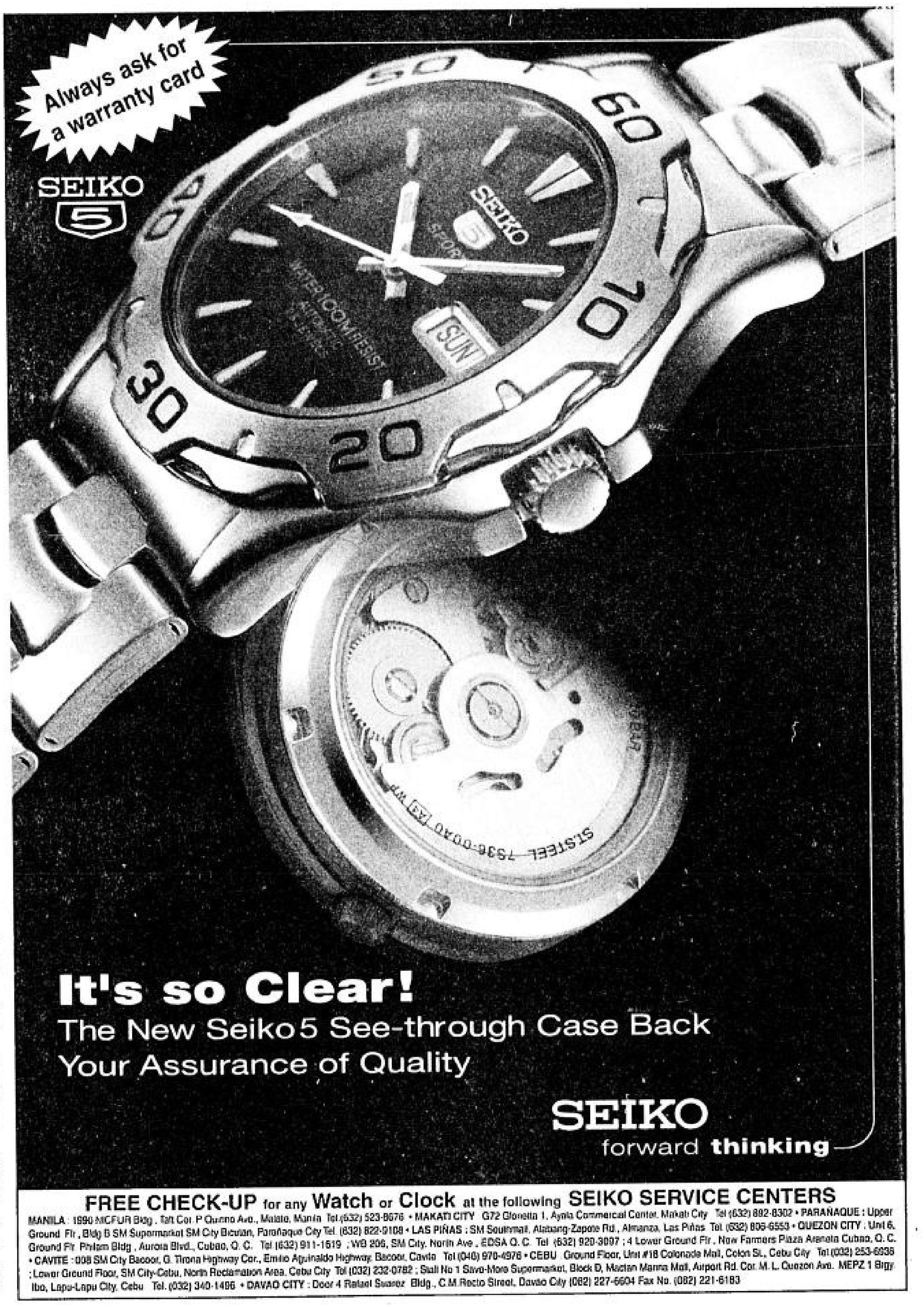
Movie billboards should also stop featuring actors carrying guns, while gun advertisements in the print media should also be prohibited, he added.

Pacheco, who last year launched the Kapatiran Para sa Pangkalahatang Kabutihan party, said he regards Ms Macapagal's order as a victory for the signature campaign he launched in 1991 for the Gunless Society Movement.

The campaign drew over a million signatures and the support of the influential Catholic Church, he recalled.

"We are happy she had made this decisive action which is long overdue. She has started it and she can do much more in removing the gun culture to which even our young children have become exposed," he said.

"We should remove conditions that make owning a gun very tempting," he said, noting that in other Asian countries like Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea civilians are absolutely barred from owning firearms. *With reports from Volt Contreras, Christine Avendaño; Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; AFP*



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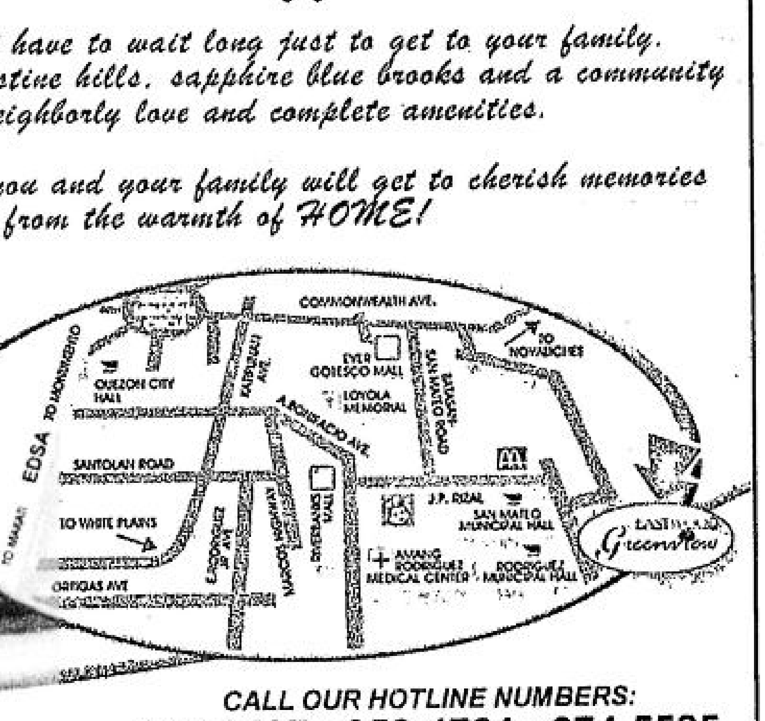

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OPINION

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Growth

EDITORIAL

THE ECONOMY defied the law of gravity when it posted a 4.6 percent gross domestic product growth and a gross national product growth of 5.2 percent in 2002. The GDP growth rate exceeded the government projection of 4 to 4.5 percent and topped the 2001 GDP figure of 3.2 percent.

The 2001 economic expansion also surpassed the Asian Development Bank forecast of 4 percent for all of 2002 (which was even lower than that of the government's), making the Philippine economy one of the more robust economies in Asia, despite the global economic downturn.

This better-than-expected growth prompted President Macapagal-Arroyo to announce the good news, which indeed, is a welcome development amid the gloom and anxiety cast by a possible war in Iraq and turbulence in the domestic political scene.

It is statistically accurate to say that the growth is the highest since the Asian financial crisis of the mid-1970s. Private sector analysts could not quite believe their eyes when they saw the growth statistics, and the only thing they could do was to ask the question: Is such growth sustainable?

But sustainability will be determined by the economic performance during the current year, and it could be dashed if war breaks out in Iraq. The more important point is that there has been a trend toward expansion during the past year and the 2002 figures show that there has been a breakthrough.

The President has said that with this breakthrough, the growth can now be translated into social equity. It is pointless to ask, where are the jobs? Jobs are not created during slow growth. They can only come after sustained growth. Thus, it is important to sustain growth so that within two years at least, such growth can be translated into equity and job creation.

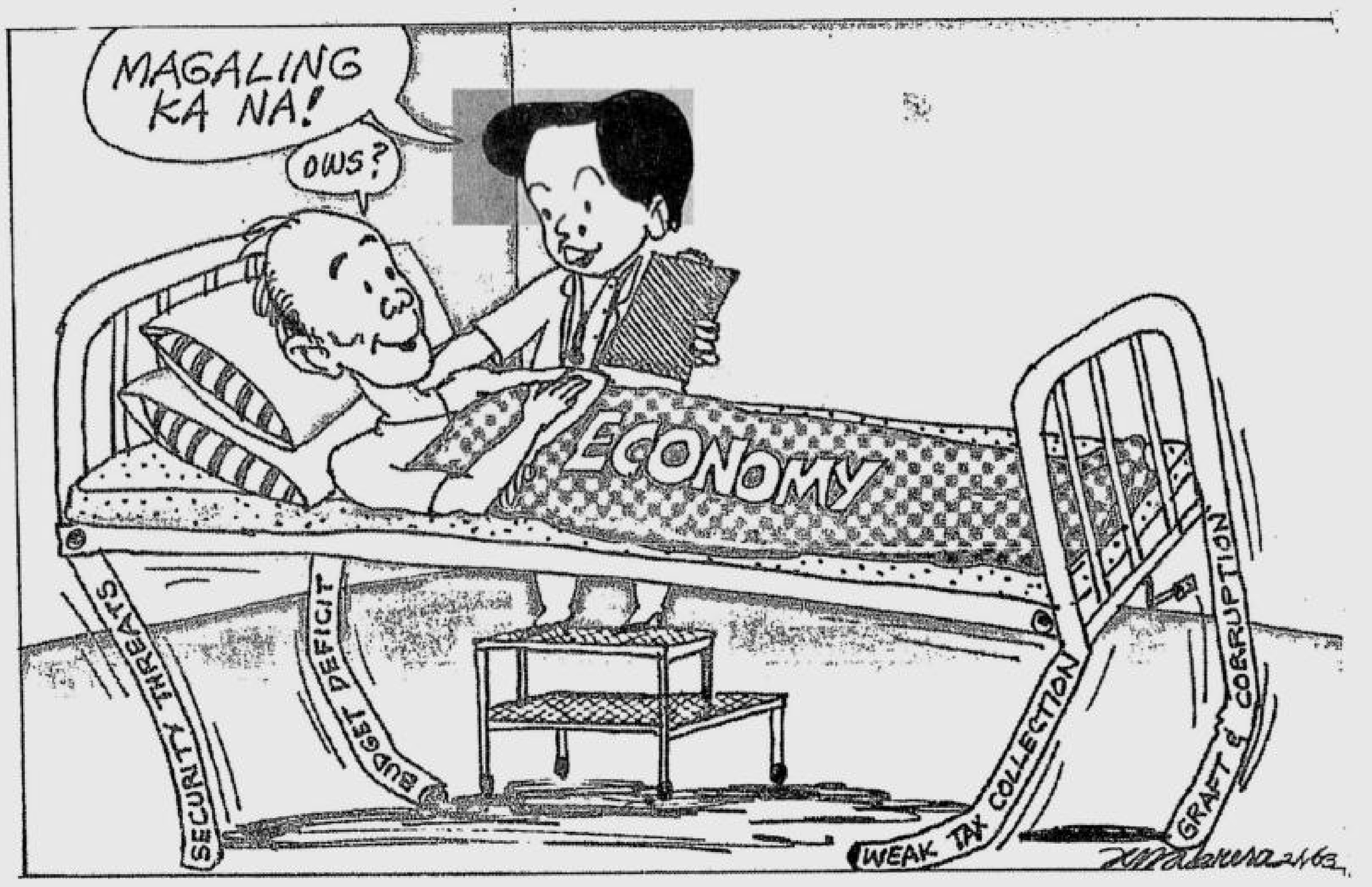
Government economists have attributed the growth to overall expansion in all sectors: 3.5 percent in agriculture, fishery and forestry; 4.4 percent in industry; and 5.4 percent in services. Among these sectors, agriculture showed the slowest growth—3.5 percent, down from 3.7 percent in 2001—although there was a robust growth of 6.1 percent in the fourth quarter. This sector, which is sensitive to the vagaries of the weather (i.e., El Niño), should be the focus of the microeconomic programs of the administration during its remaining 15 months in office. Industry made a hefty leap to 4.4 percent from 1.3 in 2001, and services expanded by 5.4 percent from 4.4 percent.

True, the soaring deficits represent the downside of the economy and it is possible that growth would have been higher if the deficits were lower. Nevertheless, it should be understood that growth does not take place in a vacuum or by accident. Growth is promoted within a context of sound economic policies and management.

The identification of how much growth took place does not explain much. Economists like to make interpretations in economic terms, avoiding the tricky path of analysis of the political economy or the impact of politics on growth or economic contraction. What is remarkable in this expansion is that the economy has taken off from negative .58 percent in 1998, to 3.4 percent in 1999, 4.01 percent in 2000, 3.2 in 2001 and 4.6 during the past year.

Economic growth since 2001 took place under the most trying and unstable political circumstances. The May 1, 2001, rebellion against the government, the torrid May 2001 senatorial elections, the continuing assault on the legitimacy of the government, the rounds of political gridlock and the never-ending barrage of corruption allegations (most of which have remained unsubstantiated) did not create a most auspicious environment that drives growth.

Going beyond purely economic explanations, it seems clear that economies can develop in the face of political turbulence and grow by their own dynamism and resilience. Taken from this perspective, it is possible to conclude that the economy grew because it has developed a dynamism driven by domestic consumption. Having a solid economic policy framework should not be discounted as a major factor fueling such dynamism.



Manipulation by merchants

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

AS early as last month, the manipulation had already begun. Now that it's February, the pressure has increased. They're playing the old sweet sentimental songs of love. Broadcasters are reciting soulful poetry to lovelorn listeners. It's about Valentine's Day.

Only last December, and even before that, we were daily given the countdown to Christmas. Radio and TV reminded us of the coming Yuletide. Don't forget your loved ones. Do your shopping early. Avoid the rush. Christmas is for remembering. Don't be a Scrooge. Et cetera, et cetera.

After Christmas, the hucksters assured us that there was still time to remember forgotten friends on New Year's Day. If you should still forget, you could make up on Three Kings Day. Unsold stock last Christmas is now on SALE! Take advantage of our annual inventory. Fifty percent discount on all items! Hurry!

And now it's Feb. 1, 13 days before Valentine's Day.

Are you going to ignore this day for lovers? Will you forget this dedication for spouses and sweethearts and other kinds of partners? Remember that Romeo and Juliet died together for this eternal emotion. Elizabeth Taylor has married eight times for the same feeling, and she may still be counting.

Gifts on Valentine's Day may depend on the giver's love or generosity. They may vary from simple Hallmark cards in tender rhymes or expensive jewelry that will say all. The cards need not be sent to only one and only but may be bought wholesale. And the diamond bracelet is not necessarily for the trusting wife.

In these hard times, long-stemmed roses will be much in demand. Although not inexpensive, they are at least generally affordable. Roses are ideal because they betoken love, especially if they are in full bloom. And they can be cherished even if they have already faded, between the pages of the loved one's diary.

As a struggling lawyer during the '50s, I could afford to give my wife Sally only a can of imported chocolates on Valentine's Day. She appreciated my thoughtfulness and devoured all the contents with gusto. After all these years, she still keeps the can for her sewing kit, probably to remind her of the chocolates.

Maybe she is hinting that I remember her again with confections rather than more expensive presents. The only problem is that sweets are completely taboo for her even on Valentine's Day although she is able once in a while to finish a Toblerone on the sly.

I remember one Valentine's Day in UP where, during our class in Math under a stern professor, a messenger from a florist shop interrupted the recitations with a bouquet for a pretty classmate. The professor snorted his annoyance but allowed the delivery to the flustered lady who probably wanted to disappear forever.

That professor did not appreciate the excuse of Valentine's Day for the trespass on his class. And rightly so. For love is love and math is math and never the twain shall meet. As for that embarrassed student, I hope she passed the subject, married her intrusive suitor, and lived happily ever after.

Like so many others, I too underwent the throes of love many times when I was young and looking for romance. That is why I can understand the excitement of the Lotharios of today to express their feelings to their inamorata as we did before them. But we had different ways of wooing.

Our love songs were more ardent than their current popular music, as they call it. Bing Crosby crooned "True Love" and Frank Sinatra "The Nearness of You," and there were the classic "Stardust," "Night and Day," "Blue Moon," and other hits. Dinah Shore and Ella Fitzgerald sang them as no one else could.

The songs of Eminem's generation suggest rumpled hair, faded torn denims, exposed navels and green fingernails. Everything is informal now, sometimes rudely so. The change began when the Beatles sang "I Want to Hold Your Hand," and the Rolling Stones complained, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." Lyrics have since then lost the charm of such soulful lines, as "You are the promised kiss of springtime that makes the lonely winter seem long."

But despite the difference in our sense of values, our common regard for Valentine's Day as a day for the avowal of love remains unchanged. As before, it is still being exploited by the makers and sellers of the gifts that are supposed to give meaning to the day.

Valentine's Day need not be the only time to express our feelings for someone we love. We can do that any day, and without the need to accompany our sentiments with presents. But the business people will not allow that affirmation to be merely optional and intangible—and free. To promote their sales, they have made Valentine's Day an obligatory occasion for gift-giving as evidence of love, and solvency.

Pity the penniless lover who already overshot his budget last Christmas and must buy his fiancée another gift on Valentine's Day. And another on her Graduation Day next month, and another for Easter in April, and there's her birthday too. The merchants are keeping these dates in mind to manipulate us all year round, for their financial benefit. All this is in the name of love.

Increasing tax burden of salaried workers

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE MORE one looks at the data, the more painfully clear it becomes that compensation income earners (salaried workers) in the Philippines carry more than their fair share of the country's tax burden. And there is every sign that the weight they bear has been increasing.

Not very long ago—1995, to be exact—professionals and persons engaged in trade and business in this country contributed 24 percent of the total income taxes paid by individuals, with fixed-income or salaried workers contributing 66 percent. By last year, the contribution of the salaried workers to total income tax collections had jumped to 83 percent, and that of the professionals had decreased to 12 percent. Looked at another way, tax contributions from professionals, etc. in 1995 amounted to 0.49 percent of the country's output (GDP) while that from salaried workers was 1.34 percent of GDP. By 2002, these percentages were 0.26 percent and 1.81 percent, respectively.

Of course, one can argue that salaried workers far outnumber businesses or professionals (BPs), so their contributions should be greater. However, the data also show that while salaried workers outnumber BPs by a ratio of about four to one (based on number of income tax returns filed in 2001), the income taxes they paid were nearly eight times more. That is lopsided by any standard.

It is not hard to think of reasons why the relative tax burden of the fixed-income taxpayer is increasing: it is much easier for BPs than for salaried workers to avoid (or evade) taxes; income tax rates were reduced by the 1997 CTRP Law, but ceilings on deductions that the law envisioned have not yet been fully imposed. However, the more relevant question which needs to be addressed is, why it is so lopsided in the first place?

The 1996 distribution of individual income tax filers (by major type of income earned—business, mixed and compensation) classified according to gross income bracket and by effective tax rate (income taxes paid divided by gross income) is very enlightening in this regard.

Take the P75,001 to P100,000 tax bracket. A fixed or compensation income earner would be paying 7.9 percent of this in taxes. Someone who has mixed income (fixed plus business) would be paying 4.9 percent. The BPs would be paying only 1.7 percent.

When the gross income reaches the P500,001 to P550,000 bracket, the salaried worker pays 23.5 percent in withholding. The mixed income earner pays 9.2 percent in income taxes; while the BP income earner pays 3.3 percent in taxes. It may interest the reader to know that families earning an annual income of P500,000 and over comprised the top 1.1 percent of families in 1997 and the top 1.6 percent in 2000.

The bottom line is that while the weighted average effective tax rate for salaried workers in 1996 was 26.7 percent (and hasn't changed much since then, I am given to understand), mixed income earners and BPs had effective tax rates of 5.7 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively.

Why the huge disparity in effective tax rates? It is obvious: Mixed income earners and BPs are allowed to claim deductions, almost with impunity, while the fixed income earners cannot deduct a single centavo, aside from personal exemptions.

How did that come about? My friend, former Finance Undersecretary Nene Guevara, who has the memory of an elephant, can explain that chapter and verse. But she is out of town at the moment, so I hope that my memory serves.

If I recall correctly, this came about because someone had the bright idea of "simplifying" the tax system. This was supposed to be beneficial for both the taxpayer and the tax administrator: no deductions other than personal exemptions, therefore no additional forms to fill, much easier to figure out tax liabilities. The simplification, it was thought, might also increase the tax base, because people who were turned off by the complicated tax forms and calculations would now be encouraged to pay their taxes. Not to mention that it would result in greater revenues for the government.

Granting that this was the case, it can now be argued that with improved technology, the simplification is no longer necessary. Simple-minded people have all those calculators and computers to help them.

More importantly, equity and efficiency considerations militate for allowing wage earners certain deductions, or even tax credits. Such as expenses for education: it is universally recognized that education is key to increased incomes (and therefore increased tax revenues). Medical expenses also belong to this category: sick people can't earn very much, and can't pay very much in taxes. There's the added fillip that allowing these deductions ensures that the taxpayer demands receipts from medical professionals, thus shooting two birds with one stone. Another important deduction, which would also benefit the economy, would be interest payments on housing mortgages, which would encourage people to build homes, which in turn impacts on other sectors of the economy.

And if the government still worries about losing revenues, the tax experts are there to come up with, say, an Alternative Minimum Taxable Income Scheme, which is practiced in the United States.

But one thing is clear. It is high time salaried workers were given a fair shake. Ralph Recto, Jules Ledesma, Jesli Lapus, please take note.

Appeal to House members

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

BURIED in the stories on the impending war against Iraq was a little news item that serves as indication of the kind of war being waged in our times, and the kind of precaution the United States is taking, following the Sept. 11 event. The item said that at the recent State of the Union address of US President George Bush, one member of his Cabinet was designated not to attend for security reasons: US Attorney General John Ashcroft. In the Capitol, aside from Bush, were Vice President Dick Cheney, who serves as the presiding officer of the US Senate, and the US Chief Justice. Obviously, the thinking was that if anything should happen to these three top officials, Ashcroft could mobilize help.

* * *

The item also said that amid the super-tight security on the Capitol premises, 800 gas masks were kept ready at the House of Representatives side of the US Congress in case of a chemical or bio-terrorism attack. Such an attack, which could be launched through the air-conditioning pipes of the Capitol building, could wipe out the entire US officialdom, hence the need for those masks. This shows how unconventional the war against terrorism has become, apart from its being truly borderless. It also shows the heightened concern of Americans after Sept. 11., which gives us a clue as to the reason they are ready to wage war against Iraq even without their allies.

* * *

Members of an official Filipino delegation who recently traveled to Iran made a stopover in Kuwait, where they spoke to some Filipinos working at the airport. The Pinoys stressed that they did not intend to be evacuated to the Philippines in the event of war but would rather gamble with their safety in Kuwait. They said they had spent all they had to get there and besides they couldn't get jobs back home. This thinking doubtless predominates among the Pinoys in the Middle East, and it's going to complicate the government's evacuation plans.

* * *

Last Wednesday afternoon, Speaker Jose de Venecia asked Deputy Speaker Emilio Espinosa to preside over the session, but he did not leave the session hall. He closely followed the proceedings which became quite heated at one point. Much of the debate concerned the fate of the justice committee report which ruled that the 280-page impeachment complaint filed by various citizens' groups against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco was "insufficient in substance." The next step is a vote by the entire House in plenary on whether to accept or reject this report which is scheduled on Tuesday. JDV must have been exhausted by all this. Last Thursday evening, he felt chest pains and he had to be rushed to Makati Medical Center where he is under observation. I wish JDV gets adequate rest.

* * *

What's obvious since last Monday is the growing concern of House members that the impeachment complaint against Tancangco was not given due course by the justice committee. There is now a feeling that it ought to be returned to the committee for investigation. As Bataan Rep. Antonio Roman put it, how can House members be expected to make an intelligent judgment on the committee report when it cited no basis for its claim that the complaint was insufficient in substance? The citizens hope the House members will vote to return that report to the committee, where the grave charges against Tancangco can be verified. It's the just thing to do.

* * *

Not too long ago, two dynamic priests, Fathers Vic Robles, rector of the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Marilao, Bulacan, and Edgardo de Jesus, were looking for a role model for the young people, to keep them away from drugs and crime. My brother, Luis Olivares Jr., suggested the heroic Jesuit martyr, Bro. Richie Fernando, whose parents, Raymundo and Visitacion Fernando, are also from Bulacan.

When he died in 1996, the tall, good-looking Richie was a 26-year-old scholastic serving his regency in Cambodia with the Jesuit Refugee Service. It was the fulfillment of his dream of serving as a missionary in a foreign land. His work was in a technical school 25 kms. from Phnom Penh, run by the Jesuits for handicapped victims of land mines. In October 1996, Bro. Richie was killed after an emotionally troubled student, who was angry at his fellow students, exploded a grenade. Sensing danger, Richie shouted to the other students to keep away as he grappled with the grenade-thrower. The grenade tore through his body, splattering his blood all over the walls. His grieving students gathered his blood into a receptacle and buried it on the school grounds. Later they erected a shrine in his memory.

* * *

To make Bro. Richie known to the youth, it was decided to hold an exhibit on his life. This will be inaugurated tomorrow, Feb. 2, at 4:30 p.m. at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Marilao, with Bishop Deogracias Iniguez, himself a Bulakeño, and Cambodian Ambassador Ek Sereywath cutting the ribbon. The Mass, with Bishop Iniguez as principal celebrant, will be at 5 p.m.

* * *

Calling all alumnae of the College of the Holy Spirit. Tomorrow is the annual homecoming, starting at 8 a.m., with this year's silver jubilarians, the high school class of '78, as hosts. HS class '53 is the golden jubilarian class. Other jubilarians include HS classes '33, '38, '48, '58, '63, '68, '73 and college '78. A special program and various spectacles await the alumnae. The golden jubilarians, led by Julie Legarda, Dolly Quimbo Perez and Cecilia Villamonte, are calling on all their classmates to be around for this once-in-a-lifetime event (tel. nos. 951-7604/531-0819).

A 'mestizo's' revenge

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

GROWING up *mestizo* in the Philippines, Peque Gallaga says he reveled in the perks of "coñodom" until the late 1960s when nationalism became all the rage. All of a sudden, he, who had never thought of himself as other than Filipino, began to be ridiculed as somehow less than Pinoy because of his fair skin and privileged background.

"That's the movie I want to make," confessed Peque during the open forum following the screening in celebration of the 20th anniversary of "Oro, Plata, Mata." In fact, even after "Oro" was shown and hailed as the cinematic masterpiece it is, Peque still came in for his share of brickbats from critics who derided him for making this film about "rich people."

"Of course, it isn't just about rich people," Peque says today. "It's about the death of a culture." That culture being, of course, the smug, insular world of *hacienderos* and their indolent wives, whiling their time away on endless games of mahjong, and asserting their privileges born of birthright and wealth.

Peque says "it was about time" the *mestizo* class got its comeuppance when nationalism broke like a wave on even the most exclusive campuses. And in the most profound sense, "Oro" was also an indictment of the world of the haciendas, the "golden" era that was innocent only because it was built on the blood and sweat of powerless peasants.

* * *

WHILE I personally enjoyed the "Oro" portion most, evoking as it did the grace and graciousness of a lost era, it's the darker sequences that follow that give "Oro, Plata, Mata" its enduring character.

I was stunned by the brutality, the raw violence and animal sex of the movie when I first saw it in 1983 at the doomed Film Center. Twenty years later, the scenes still have the power to shock.

"I hope that 20 years from now, people who see the movie for the first time will still be asking, 'What the hell was Kuh Ledesma doing in the movie?'" remarked Peque. Everyone laughed, because the "diwata-socialite" character has been either an enigma or an annoyance to the movie's many fans. And though Peque offered an explanation "for the last time," I'm keeping mum because figuring out Kuh's character is part of the fun of watching "Oro."

During the film's premiere 20 years ago, the audience spontaneously broke into applause at the end of the "Oro" sequences, when the fleeing *hacendero* families, aboard carabao-driven carts, are shown silhouetted against the flames of burning sugarcane fields. CGIs and technical advances may make such bravado filmmaking obsolete, but two decades later, I wanted to rise to my feet and cheer everyone involved in "Oro" for such reckless courage. Bravo!

* * *

OPENING the UK Film Festival, ongoing until Feb. 4 at the Shangri-la Plaza Mall, was "Bend It Like Beckham" that, yes, is all about football, but is also about growing up female and football-obsessed when your folks are mainly concerned about your marital prospects.

Jesse and Jules are both 18, and both idolize David Beckham, a star in the football firmament who needs no introduction. They also happen to be excellent football players, but to their parents, football is not only a useless pastime but also an obstacle to what should be the girls' rightful goal in life: finding the right men to marry and start families of their own.

The pressure is extremely heavy on Jesse, who is of Indian ethnicity and is furthermore increasingly the focus of her parents' concern because her older sister has gotten engaged. Where to find a suitable Indian boy whose parents will want to welcome her into their fold, when all her time is spent on the football field and she can't cook a decent Punjabi meal?

But Jules doesn't have it so easy, either. Her mother is worried that Jules is growing up a tomboy, a lesbian even. She tries to steer Jules into improving her chances in the marital stakes, but even as she pushes push-up bras on her rail-thin daughter, the girl only has eyes for sports bras. It's not how you look when you're wearing them, she argues with Jules, it's what you feel while you're wearing them. But while her mother dreams of a white wedding, Jules can only fantasize about being the star of a professional women's football team.

* * *

A COMING-of-age film, a buddy flick, a love story, "Bend It Like Beckham" is also a hilarious, fond and fun look at Indian-British culture and a multicultural Britain.

When Jesse is called a "Paki" during a game and she starts a brawl, she cries on her coach Joe's shoulder then mutters bitterly: "But you won't understand." "Of course I understand," Joe replies, "I'm Irish."

There are echoes of other films about the immigrant experience in "Bend It," especially "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" because a large chunk of film time—and its most amusing sequences—are set during the wedding of Jesse's sister. Incorporating Indian dance, song, ritual and color, the wedding sequences also remind one of Bollywood productions, since no Indian movie is complete without at least one song-and-dance sequence.

Other featured films in the UK Film Festival are "Born Romantic," about three Londoners in search of love and romance; "Divorcing Jack," a suspense-mystery; "Last Resort," about a Russian refugee seeking asylum in an isolated coastal resort; and "Love and Death in Long Island," about an old man's obsession with a young rock star.

"Choice Cuts" of popular and classic BBC shows and series will also be shown at the British Council Information Centre. Austen fanatics should be excited to know that all six hours of the BBC mini-series "Pride and Prejudice" is part of the fare.

Magellan in Homonhon

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

ACCORDING to an article by Percy Hill published in 1934 in Philippine Magazine, in 1867 the civil archives of the government were stored in an old building on Calle Postigo in Intramuros, while the judicial archives were kept in the Audiencia and the ecclesiastical ones in the archbishop's palace. During the British occupation of Manila, some records were sent to Spain. Those that remained of the civil archives were ransacked and some documents were taken to enrich the British Museum. Many others were destroyed in the course of time by the damp, insects and mold.

That year (1934) Gil Piamontes de Alazerna found an old chest locked with a rusted padlock with the following inscription: "Opus Excellentisimus Alfonsus Fazardus Tensae Gobernatum Philipinum Insularium. Diversae et venales res." The contents, which might have clarified incidents in that unfortunate governor's life, turned out to be a bucket of dust. Other documents had to do with the establishment of the Parian and injunctions against mixed marriages, entitled "Valde Spectabilum Esse. Gonzalus Ronquilae Penalosae Gobernatum Emeritus Phillipinarum Insulae Densitas Japonicus, Chinae et Maurorum. Manilae Anno Domini 1580."

Of special interest was a document relating to Magellan's voyage, his landing in Suluan (Homonhon) and the treaty with the natives there. Suluan, 20 miles east of Homonhon (also known as Jomojon), rose some 125 feet above sea level and had good fishing grounds around it. It was inhabited depending on the seasons since it faced the Pacific unsheltered from the winds. Homonhon had two mountains, one 250 feet high in the south and the other 340 feet in the north.

The Trinidad, Magellan's flagship, had as its pilot Esteban Gomez de Eloriaga, chaplain Fray Pedro Valderama, secretary and scribe Leon de Espeleta, master of camp Juan Bautista de Pontferrol, alguacil Gonzalo Gomez de Espinosa, quartermaster Francisco Albo and surgeon Juan Morales along with 14 sailors, 10 seamen, five pages, two sail-makers, a cabin boy and a Mallacan interpreter named Enrique. The latter had been bought by Magellan when he was in Mallaca on an earlier voyage, which led to the assumption that Magellan had heard of the Philippines before he ever got here considering that Mallaca had a settlement of Filipinos when he was there.

The Trinidad left the island of Canoyas (the original Ladrones, even if some people insist it refers to the Philippines) on March 7, 1521. It sailed until they sighted Samar, passed the isle of Suluan and landed in Homonhon where they rested for a few days.

Several canoes or *proas* visited them, carrying the chiefs of Suluan and Visayas called Inaroyan, Limbas, Bucad, Layong, Calipay, Badiao, Cabuling and Datu Garas-Garas. They came aboard and Magellan, through Enrique, told them Charles V had sent them to convert them to Christianity. Magellan also complained of thievery in Canoyas for which Garas-Garas apologized. Garas-Garas said the chief of Canoyas was Tilic-Mata who was no friend of theirs. He also explained that some years back white men had been to Canoyas and asked for provisions, promising to barter some goods. They had failed to do so, and this might explain the behavior of the inhabitants

The Spaniards disembarked and the men of Garas-Garas, with their fishing boats and nets, fished for them, catching a great quantity of fish. The Spaniards pitched their tents ashore and those suffering from scurvy benefited by eating coconuts, fruits and vegetables. They called Homonhon "Nueva Providencia."

Garas-Garas retired to his mountain clearing and the next day Magallanes sent Albo, the quartermaster, to notify him that he wanted to forge a peace pact. Garas-Garas had gone away to gather food for a feast but Inaroyan was there. Unfortunately Albo addressed him in a rude and insulting manner and ordered him to go to the ship. Inaroyan refused.

At the moment Garas-Garas (who appears to have been a man of peace), bearing supplies for Magallanes, arrived and pacified the two. The contingent went off to see Magallanes who received Garas-Garas in his finest clothes. The *datu* requested that Inaroyan be pardoned as he was a great warrior but a hothead. Magallanes forthwith reprimanded Albo severely. Garas-Garas asked that he pardon Albo as well.

The gifts consisted of two large jars of rice, a bamboo tube filled with honey, pigs, fowls, fruit and vegetables, and a gold-headed truncheon. The last was refused by Magallanes as too valuable. He in turn gave the chief a mantle of wool, a purple hat, some shirts of merino, knives from Toledo, mirrors and silver buttons. The chief divided these among his men and brought forth a jar of *tuba* that had the same effect as any wine from Jerez and Rioja. They toasted and drank to each other's health.

They also agreed to sign a treaty of peace which was done on March 19 when most of the Spaniards disembarked. Mass was celebrated and later a tall cross was planted near the shore. Garas-Garas, Inaroyan and the other chiefs signed the treaty of friendship that began: "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen. In the island of Suluan this 19th day of March 1521, before me, Notary and Scribe of the Expedition sent by His Majesty, the King of Spain, I, Leon de Espeleta, hereby testify..."

The rest, as they say, is history.

(From the article, "A Hitherto Unpublished Document on the Landing of Magellan at Homonhon," by Percy Hill, 1934, Philippine Magazine.)

Chasing butterflies

YOUNG BLOOD

Rayts dela Cruz

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

BUTTERFLIES make me think of trees. Trees make me think of leaves. Leaves make me think of a vast green field. A vast green field makes me think of my brother. My brother makes me think of butterflies.

I became strongly attracted to butterflies when I was still a kid. I made every effort to chase them and follow their flights but it took a long time before I had the nerve to catch and hold them in my hands.

My fascination with butterflies started one day when I tagged along with my big brother and his playmates as they went out into the field to catch insects. My family lived in an area in Los Baños that was once forested, and seeing various kinds of insects wasn't new to us. In fact, it had turned into a nice hobby for some children living in our place.

When we first settled in there, only four other houses were within sight. Our nearest neighbor lived two blocks away from us. (Now, there are houses everywhere and not a space has been left vacant.)

At the back of our house was a vast, green field of *cogon* grass of different kinds. Standing there, one had a clear, panoramic view of Mt. Makiling. My brother and his two friends often went to that vacant field to catch butterflies.

The empty lot was then a sanctuary to various insects, birds and some animals. There were also occasional wildflowers growing on its periphery.

My brother used a broomstick with jackfruit latex at the end to catch butterflies. His friends simply used net traps.

Aside from collecting butterflies as a hobby, my brother and his friends did a pretty good business bringing their catch and selling them to the Entomology Department of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. A technician at the department would examine their catch and choose those that were not yet in the university's collection. The insects were preserved and displayed in a small room for students to see and study. The department had a wide collection of butterflies and other insects.

My brother and his friends would take back the butterflies rejected by the technician and bury them in the field where they caught them.

One time when my brother and his friends went out to catch butterflies, I saw a swarm of them hovering nearby. They looked like pieces of colored paper flying all over the place. It was a spectacular sight, something I've only seen in movies.

It was also a very exciting moment for me, and my fascination for butterflies has not left me since then. Their different colors invigorated my blood. Their powdery scent was intoxicating. I simply could not find the words to describe their splendor. And I could not contain my wonder and joy.

The next time I went out with my brother and his friends, I wanted to catch a butterfly and hold it in my hands. I was like a child in a postcard running after butterflies on the field. Unfortunately that first time, I couldn't even touch the tips of their wings because they were flying too high for me to reach them.

I was ready to give up when I noticed a brown peacock butterfly perched on a wildflower. Peacock butterflies are fairly common in the cooler regions of the Philippines. They can be identified by their large blue-black eyespots located on their forewing and hindwing.

When I saw that butterfly I just lunged at it and caught it with my hands. I must have grasped it too tightly because it was dead before I could even admire its real beaury. Its limp body and powdery wings stuck to my cold right hand. It was a beauty obliterated by my desire to hold it in my hands. I had killed one butterfly because of my selfish desire to own, such a fragile beauty.

When I told my brother about my experience, he taught me how to catch butterflies without crushing them to death. The first thing I had to learn, he said, was to control the overpowering urge to grasp them so hard. He taught me to control my reflexes but it was hard to hold back my instinct to reach out and hold them tight. My hands seemed to have a mind of their own. Or was it just a matter of mental conditioning?

My brother told me that there were butterflies that would alight on human hands but there were are also those that do not want to be caught. He said that in catching a butterfly with the hands, one should always accept the reality that at any moment, it will try to break free and fly away. And when that happens one must not try to hold it back for it would surely die. Just like humans, butterflies would not live long in captivity, he said. They needed freedom to live long.

Even as a grown up, I still can't stop chasing butterflies. But now they have become a metaphor for finding a new self and eternal happiness and fulfilling dreams. I will continue to run after butterflies even at the risk of stumbling and falling down quite often. My constant quest comes with the hope that one day, when I finally catch a butterfly again, I will not kill it and rob it of its beauty all at once.

Rayts dela Cruz, 24, is a Development Communication graduate of the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

THEY SAID

Cha-cha after 2004

"It will do everybody well if we set aside Charter change until after 2004 when it would have been well thought-out and clear what we want to amend in the 1987 Constitution."

—Sen. Ralph Recto, expressing opposition to amending the Constitution

Irresponsible

"Drilon is the one highly irresponsible."

—Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano, commenting on Senate President Franklin Drilon's statements that any move to change the Constitution is irresponsible

Fear of abolition

"They are afraid that the Senate may be abolished. I think that is the bottom line."

—House Deputy Speaker for Visayas Raul Gonzales, explaining the "real reason" behind the Senate's opposition to Charter change

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Estrada stopped Impsa contract

MAY I refer to salient points of an article by Cynthia Balana, titled "Senate to call Perez, pals" last Jan. 29.

The sixth paragraph stated that the ongoing Senate hearings established that the Impsa deal was signed by me as then finance secretary with the former President signing as a witness. This is not only misleading but incorrect.

Balana may be referring to the mother contract in the CBK-Impsa project, which was the Build-Rehabilitate-Operate-Transfer (BROT) agreement signed on Nov. 6, 1998. The parties directly involved in the project are the Napocor president and the Impsa representative. The Department of Finance's role was to acknowledge that there was such an agreement, Napocor being a government-owned corporation.

What I signed on Dec. 28, 2000 was the Government Acknowledgement and Consent Agreement (Gaca) which upheld an earlier Government Understanding (GU) issued by my predecessor, Secretary Edgardo Espiritu, and recognized Impsa's new partner, Edison Mission Energy. The Gaca was the subject of the legal opinion sought by the DOF from the Department of Justice.

I wish to reiterate the sequence of events from the day I signed the Gaca to the day the DOJ opinion was issued.

1. On Jan. 17, 2001, I submitted the Gaca to the office of then Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero for legal review and final opinion.

2. On Jan. 18, 2001, I called President Estrada and informed him of my reservations regarding the CBK-Impsa contract and suggested that we indefinitely hold the contract in abeyance. On the same day, Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara and I called Tuquero and relayed to him the President's decision to effectively stop the contract. That same night, I informed Sen. Serge Osmeña of our decision to stop the contract.

3. In the morning of Jan. 19, 2001, Tuquero gave instructions to Undersecretary Regis Puno to suspend action on the Impsa contract and return all documents to the DOF.

4. On Jan. 21, 2001, Tuquero ceased to be DOJ secretary. As he testified before the Senate last Jan. 14, 2003, he did not get hold of my request for a DOJ opinion. But even if he did, he would not have acted on it because of the President's instructions to hold action on Impsa.

5. On Jan. 22, 2001, in the course of a one-on-one briefing with my successor, Secretary Alberto Romulo, I informed him of our decision to hold action on Impsa and the recall of the Gaca and other documents to the DOF.

6. On Jan. 30, 2001, outgoing Undersecretary Lily Gruba and Assistant Secretary Rodom Fetiza submitted to Romulo a memorandum which mentioned that the Impsa contract had been put on hold.

7. Notwithstanding the instructions of Tuquero to hold action, the new DOJ issued an expanded legal opinion on Jan. 24, 2001, which made effective the Impsa contract. The expanded DOJ opinion paved the way for the project's "financial closure" and Impsa obtained much-needed funding from 20 lender banks.

I categorically declare that we had effectively stopped the Impsa contract during our watch. It was only made effective with the signing of a DOJ opinion under the new administration.

—JOSE T. PARDO,
Makati City

Lipa city office has no preference for any coffee brand

THIS refers to an article titled, "Barako coffee brewing no more," which was published on Jan. 9, 2003. The article said, "The (Lipa) mayor's office serves instant coffee Blend 45."

I am afraid this statement might have given this product undue publicity or create an impression that the undersigned was endorsing or favoring this particular coffee product over other similar products. This was the impression that the management of Nestlé Philippines unfairly got, and other people for that matter, upon reading the article.

In my two terms as chief executive of Lipa, Nestlé Philippines has been a solid and dependable supporter of our vital health program for our malnourished children.

The fact is, we are not particular about the brand of coffee that the staff of our office serves to our visitors.

I would therefore appreciate very much if you could provide this letter the space necessary to clarify any misconceptions generated in the minds of our readers and supporters.

—VILMA SANTOS-RECTO,
mayor, Lipa City

True to Kintanar clan ideals

THIS is in response to your news article last Jan. 27, 2003 on Rolly Kintanar.

As a member of the Kintanar clan, I am relieved that the CPP-NPA has finally admitted responsibility for the killing of our relative. However, I am saddened by the fact that they are trying to justify their crime by hurling false accusations to malign the memory of Rolly and ruin the reputation of another member of our family, retired Gen. Galileo Kintanar.

No amount of mudslinging can ever justify the dastardly act committed by the CPP-NPA. Despite his leftist ideologies during the time he was with the NPA, Rolly remained a good man. In fact, every member of the Kintanar clan lives up to the traits symbolized by our family flag (with a heart, sword, dolphin and cross at the center), and that is to dedicate our hearts, courage and intelligence to the service of God and man.

—MARTHA KINTANAR ATANACIO,
BF Homes, Parañaque City

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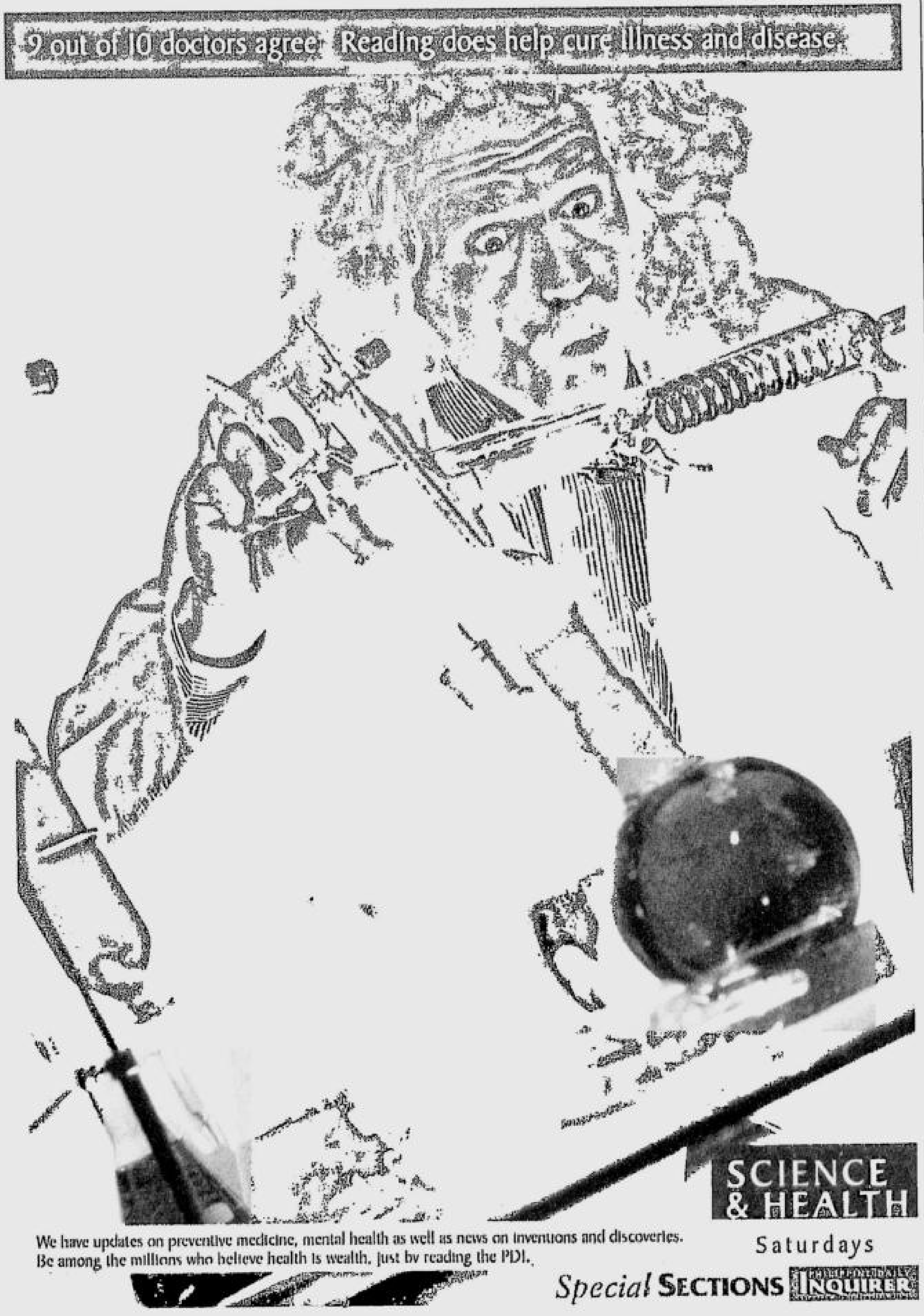

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Lopsided taxation

CONGRATULATIONS on your editorial, titled "Orgy of cheating," in your Jan. 29, 2003 issue.

This issue has been intensely discussed by my siblings, friends and officemates.

I, as a government employee, earn a monthly income of P12,000 more or less. About P1,000 is taken automatically from my salary in the form of withholding tax. I feel local entertainers as well as professionals such as doctors should be ashamed for complaining about the imposition of the value-added tax (VAT). Their yearly income is in the millions while government employees with their meager salaries cannot complain about the collection of withholding taxes.

—R.P. GALANG,
Teachers Village Association, QC

UCPB has no employee named Golpeo

THE UNITED Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) does not have an employee by the name of Ricardo Golpeo at present or in the past.

Please be informed likewise that no person by the same name is reporting to the UCPB as erroneously stated in the Jan. 18, 2003 column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan.

—MINDA H. UMALI,
vice president, Human Resources
Administration Dept.,
United Coconut Planters Bank,
7907 Makati Avenue, Makati City

Washington's Global Mafiosi

COMMENTARY

Sylvia L. Mayuga

"IT'S time we steered by the stars and not by the lights of each passing ship." Those famous words from Gen. Omar Bradley after World War II quoted by Time Magazine in the late 1980s pointed the steep way out of our planet's deepening environmental crisis.

Few were listening in the inner circles of Washington, D.C., virtual capital of the world's present oil-based civilization, when 167 nations ratified the Montreal Protocol in 1991 to cut down greenhouse gas emissions responsible for grave global warming and climate change impacting progressively on food security the world over.

A decade later in 2001, one of the first acts of George W. Bush as president was to repudiate the succeeding 1997 Kyoto Protocol, requiring wealthy nations to finally bite the bullet and cut fossil fuel pollution to 1990 levels. Adding insult to injury, Bush extended the deadline by 12 crucial years, sweetening the bitter pill with a $700 million increase in the 2003 budget to address climate change, adding $4.6 billion in tax credits for renewable energy sources over five years.

"What he calls a reduction in 'greenhouse gas intensity' is in reality a large increase in actual greenhouse gas emissions," said Rep. Henry Waxman, a Democrat from California and member of the House caucus on climate change. "His proposed voluntary system for tracking emissions will make Enron's books look honest in comparison."

"As near as we can tell, it would leave the US with an increase in emissions of 25-30 percent in 1990 levels by 2010. It's been written, paid for and delivered by Exxon," added Greenpeace spokesperson Steve Sawyer.

Indeed, while the Bush alternative to the Kyoto Protocol overtly aimed to cut nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and mercury—three of the worst pollutants in power plant emissions—it left out the major pollutant, carbon dioxide. Despite a courageous California governor independently honoring the Kyoto Protocol by signing the immediate phase-out of fossil-fueled cars in his state into law, Bush had just declared business as usual for the rest of the world's largest gas-guzzler, the United States.

With no end in sight, the world would have to continue breathing carcinogenic gases in exchange for a fossil fuel-powered lifestyle—until history stepped in, tearing the veil off the American eagle's oil-dipped claws like never before. The whole truth behind Washington's recidivism on global warming is presently being completed by unfolding revelations on its shadowy other half in Washington, D.C.'s "war on terrorism."

With CNN rallying the troops (more about the compliant American media later), this war's first brushstrokes in the post-9/11 manhunt for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida led to the bombing of Afghanistan where war continues. Next, a "USA Patriot Act" passed in the name of counter-terrorism obliterated most of the constitutional guarantees that make America a democracy. Ethnic profiling and persecution of Middle Eastern Americans followed, echoing the bad old days of black-white segregation and the whole world holding its breath yet again, hot hawkish breathing over Iraq and its oil fields, with Saddam Hussein succeeding Bin Laden as Global Enemy No. 1.

Step by step, the global shock waves delivered by 9/11 once more faded into the leering reality of the American military-industrial complex, whose most profitable business is war, its political leaders chosen under the fiat of big business led by the oil industry. By now the end of Cold War has reduced the Philippine Left's feudalism-imperialism-fascism mantra vs the United Sates and compliant Filipino presidents into politically extinct graffiti on our cityscapes.

But the past 17 months have resurrected this mantra with a new ring of truth, as the likes of the British spy thriller novelist John le Carre, the American writer Gore Vidal, and the Texan investigative journalist Jim Marrs write up a storm on Bush & Company's "war on terrorism." The details they provide on how and why Washington is once more translating "oil" to "war" paint a portrait of the American eagle as our planet's most rapacious specie.

Jim Maars, also the author of "Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy" which became the basis of Oliver Stone's film on JFK, was first to blow the whistle. In January 2002, his article "Overview of the War on Terrorism" in Australia's Nexus Magazine circulated on the Web, establishing that all of America's major wars since 1940, bar none, were fueled by greed for oil and munitions profit towards global hegemony.

With documents declassified after the US Freedom of Information Act in 1993 to 1995, Maars revealed the following war chronology:

First, that "by closing off Japan's oil supplies in the summer of '41, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the quintessential Wall Street insider, ensured an eventual attack on the United States... Roosevelt and a few close advisers knew full well that Pearl Harbor would be attacked on Dec. 7, 1941, but chose to allow it to happen to further their agenda for launching America into war." Reason? The fat lot of money to be made by the US munitions industry, evidenced by its previous windfalls from the American Civil War and World War I, and the geopolitical clout it could buy.

Second, that the Vietnam war "was prosecuted by men who were close to Roosevelt and the Council on Foreign Relations... who had long voiced a desire to gain control over Indochina's oil, magnesium and rubber assets." When "Lyndon Johnson whipped Congress into a frenzy by claiming that North Vietnamese gunboats had attacked the US Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Tonkin," in 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving Johnson the power to wage war. Like 2001's Patriot Act, it bypassed the American Constitution. But the attack was a blatant lie. "No evidence has ever been brought forward that such an attack took place," writes Maars. Even the US News & World Report called it "The Phantom Battle" that Led to War.

Third, but naturally, "The Gulf War, too, was all about oil, from the wells in Kuwait slant-drilling into Iraq's southern reserves to the destruction of the oil fields at its finish."

Stay tuned for more details: Chechnya's oil reserves and the Afghan war, the global oil aristocracy and hot war in Iraq, the Bush-Cheney-Rice troika and how America the Beautiful is fast deteriorating under the wealthy Republican thugs back in harness in Washington, D.C.

Sylvia L. Mayuga is a veteran freelance writer on historical and cultural issues.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Oil sole reason for Iraq war–Mandela

JOHANNESBURG—The sole reason for a possible US-led attack on Iraq would be to gain control of its oil resources, former South African president Nelson Mandela said Thursday, adding that President George W. Bush had no foresight and "can't think properly."

Mandela, a towering statesman respected the world over for his fight against Apartheid-era discrimination, also attacked British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whom he said had been newly deployed as the "US foreign minister" in a criticism of London's close alliance with Washington over Iraq.

"He (Blair) is no longer prime minister of Britain," Mandela opined at the opening of a three-day International Women's Forum in Johannesburg.

MANDELA, addressing the International Women's Forum, in Johannesburg, Jan 30. AP

Mandela said the "arrogant behavior" by the United States was mainly motivated by Iraq's rich oil reserves.

"It is a tragedy what is happening, what Bush is doing in Iraq," Mandela told the audience. "What I am condemning is that one power, with a president who has no foresight, who cannot think properly, is now wanting to plunge the world into a holocaust," he added, to loud applause.

"Why does the United States behave so arrogantly? Their friend Israel has got weapons of mass destruction but because it's their ally they won't ask the United Nations to get rid of them.

Mandela said the US leader and were undermining the United Nations, and suggested they would not be doing so if the organization had a white leader.

"Both Bush as well as Tony Blair are undermining an idea (the United Nations) which was sponsored by their predecessors," Mandela said. "Is this because the secretary general of the United Nations (Ghanaian Kofi Annan) is now a black man? They never did that when secretary generals were white."

Mandela said he would support without reservation any action agreed upon by the United Nations against Iraq, which Bush and Blair say has weapons of mass destruction and is a sponsor of terror groups, including Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

The United States has promised to reveal evidence that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has breached UN resolutions, a charge Iraq denies.

Mandela said action without UN support was unacceptable and set a bad precedent for world politics.

"Are they saying this is a lesson that you should follow, or are they saying we are special, what we do should not be done by anyone?" he said in his speech.

Nobel Peace Laureate Mandela, 84, has spoken out many times against Bush's stance, and South Africa's close ties with Libya and Cuba irked Washington during Mandela's own presidency.

He also attacked the United States's record on human rights, criticizing the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagaski in World War Two.

"Because they decided to kill innocent people in Japan, who are still suffering from that, who are they now to pretend that they are the policeman of the world?" he asked.

"If there is a country which has committed unspeakable atrocities, it is the United States of America... They don't care for human beings."

But he said he was happy that people, especially those in the United States, were opposing military action in Iraq.

"I hope that that opposition will one day make him understand that he has made the greatest mistake of his life," Mandela said.

"They just want the oil... We must expose this as much as possible," Mandela said.

"All Bush wants is Iraqi oil," Mandela said. "He is making the greatest mistake of his life by trying to cause carnage."

Mandela's latest scathing attack on the two world leaders came as South African President Thabo Mbeki prepared to leave for Britain to meet with Blair at the weekend.

"Mbeki will meet with Blair in the context of the global effort to avert war with Iraq," foreign ministry spokesperson Ronnie Mamoepa said on Thursday.

South Africa has repeatedly called on the United States and its British ally to resolve the Iraqi crisis through the UN Security Council.

Mandela reiterated Mbeki's position that the United Nations should be left to deal with the Iraqi crisis, the local news agency SAPA reported.

AFP, Reuters

Reviving oil empire a top US goal for post-Saddam era

By H. Josef Hebert

WASHINGTON—If getting President Saddam Hussein is the top priority in a war with Iraq, protecting the country's oil fields is not far behind.

A US task force is conferring with energy experts, industry executives and Iraqi opposition leaders on how to revive and expand Iraq's multibillion-dollar oil empire once Saddam is toppled.

With Iraq's oil reserves second only to Saudi Arabia's, the Bush administration views revenue from oil exports essential to rebuilding the country once the fighting stops.

But government officials also believe the less said publicly about Iraq's oil, the better, lest they stoke criticism, already heard in much of the Arab world and Europe, that a war with Saddam is as much about oil as it is about terrorism. Similar concerns were heard during recent anti-war protests in Washington.

"A heavy American hand will only convince (the Iraqis) and the rest of the world that the operation against Iraq was undertaken for imperialist, rather than disarmament reasons," warns Edward Djerejian, director of the James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. He co-authored a recent report—with the Council on Foreign Relations—on dealing with a post-Saddam Iraq.

That report urged that the Iraqis be allowed to keep control of their oil sector and that US officials work to assure "a level playing field" for international companies competing for repair work and future exploration and development.

Meanwhile, Pentagon planners have spent long hours on a strategy for protecting the oil fields, fearing that Saddam might torch many of the 1,500 wells—as he did to Kuwaiti oil fields in 1991. Although declining to give details, one senior defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, says planners intend to secure and protect the fields as rapidly as possible.

The options reportedly range from dispatching special forces into the Iraqi fields during the early fighting to using electronic jamming equipment to hinder a coordinated destruction of hundreds of wells. US planners also hope those who run Iraq's oil industry might balk if ordered to destroy their own wells.

"It's one thing to set the wells of another country on fire, and another to set your own on fire," said Robert Ebel, an energy expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

CSIS has studied possible Iraqi war scenarios and how they might affect future oil production. But Ebel ventures no solid prediction because, he said, "We don't know what kind of Iraq we're going to have in the morning after."

What is certain, he said, is that "there will be a massive investment program to get the (Iraqi oil) industry first back on its feet and then to top it off with expansion."

The cost could reach $40 billion, according to the report Djerejian co-authored.

Energy service companies such as Halliburton and Bechtel, which oversaw the repair of Kuwait's fields, could earn billions of dollars in deals to upgrade wells, pipes, pumping stations and export terminals in Iraq.

And the world's oil giants—from Exxon Mobil Corp., and ChevronTexaco to Russia's Lukoil—are looking for a chance to negotiate lucrative development deals with Iraq and reap part of what some believe eventually could be a 6-million-barrel-a-day stream of oil. Last year, Iraq exported about a third of that under a UN-sponsored "oil for food" program.

That many of these companies have close ties to top Bush administration officials—including Vice President Dick Cheney, who once ran Halliburton, and the president himself—has further fueled speculation among some critics that an attack on Iraq is more about oil and imperialism than about weapons of mass destruction.

The administration strongly rejects any such intent.

AP

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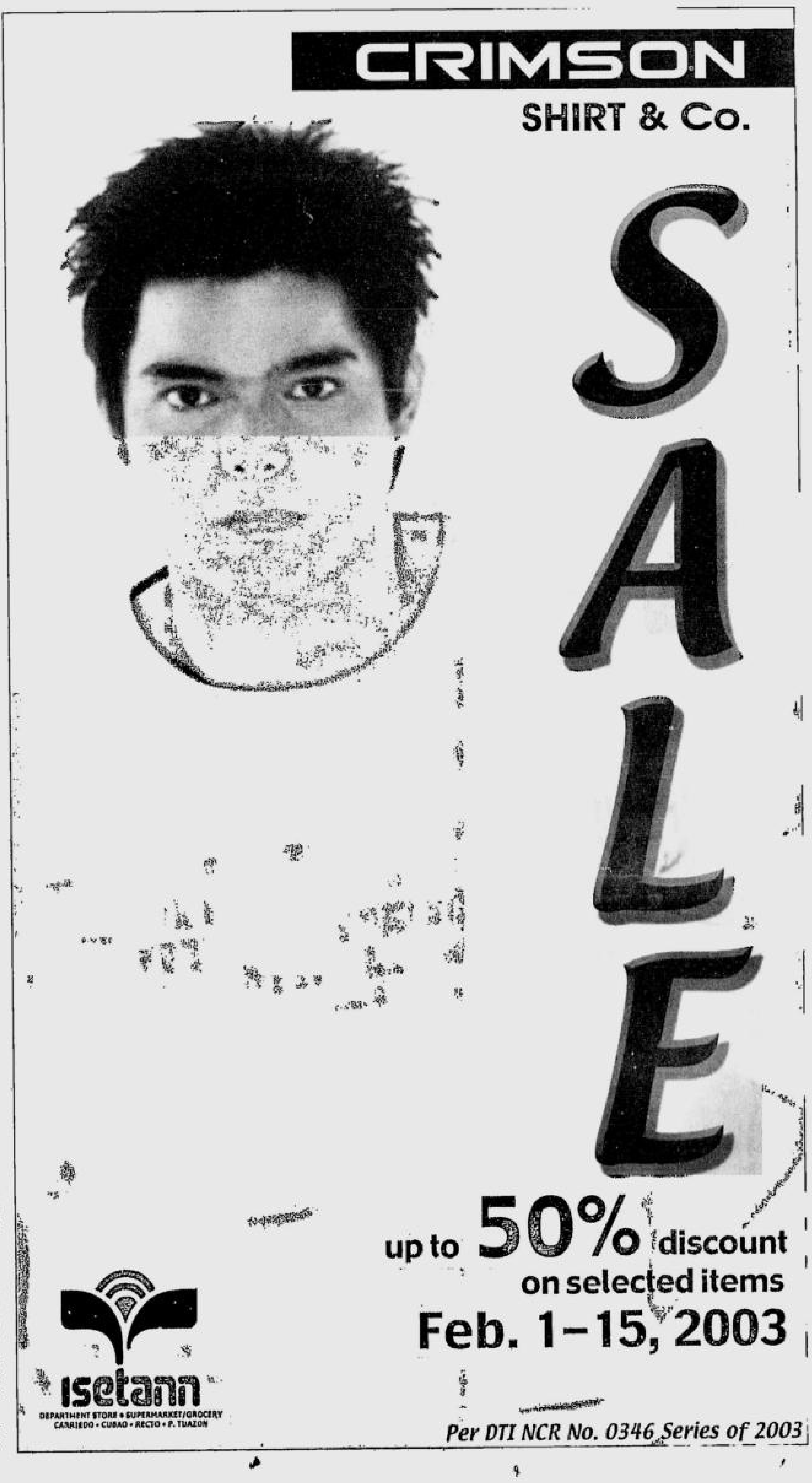

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Cambodia apologizes for anti-Thai rioting

PHNOM PENH—Cambodia has apologized and offered compensation done by mobs to Thailand's embassy during unprecedented riots that severely strained relations between the two neighbors.

The Thai Embassy was partially gutted and vandalized during riots on Wednesday in which several Thai-owned hotels, restaurants and business offices also were damaged. One Thai was believed killed and seven were injured.

In retaliation, the Thai government on Thursday closed its borders with Cambodia, downgraded diplomatic ties and suspended economic cooperation with Cambodia.

Apologizing for the violence, the Cambodian government said in a statement Thursday that it would try to compensate "quickly and unconditionally" for damage caused to the embassy, its assets and personnel.

The statement said it hoped a spirit of understanding could overcome "this most regrettable incident."

The violence was allegedly sparked by Cambodian media reports—evidently untrue—that a Thai television actress had insulted national pride by suggesting that Cambodia's famed Angkor Wat temple should belong to Thailand.

"We did not expect this to go this far... It was a mistake. We apologize and regret what happened to Thailand and her people," government spokesperson Khieu Kanharith said.

The government statement, broadcast on radio and television, said a committee would be set up to try to find ways to compensate the affected Thai private businesses as well. Among the companies hit by the violence is a mobile phone network belonging to the family of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The statement added that measures were being taken to safeguard the property of Thais who fled after the violence.

Thai military planes made seven emergency flights from Bangkok to Phnom Penh's airport Thursday to evacuate 703 Thai nationals.

Thai officials estimated the damage at 1 billion baht (US$23 million), including lost business opportunities.

A furious Thaksin said he has ordered a suspension of all business, cultural and other activities with Cambodia. Diplomatic ties were downgraded to charge d'affaires level.

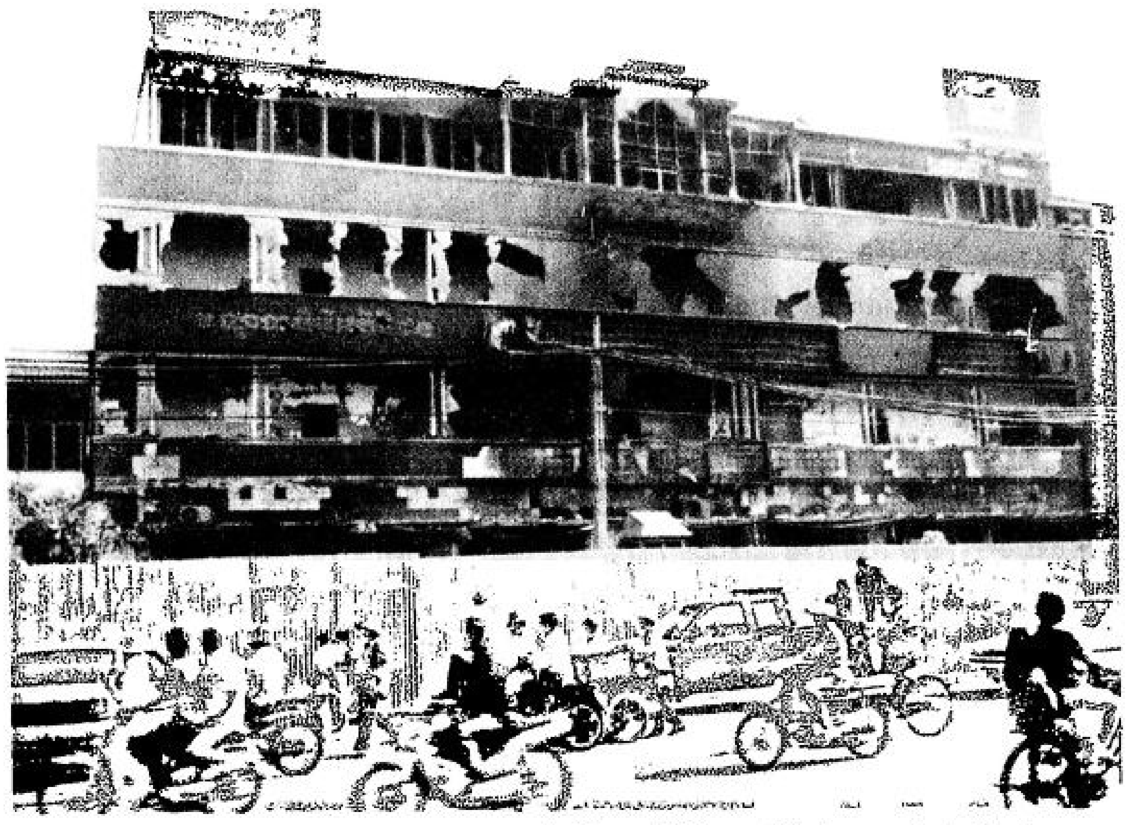
"All ongoing government projects on technical and economic cooperation between the two countries are henceforth suspended," said an official letter handed over to the Cambodian ambassador, who was also expelled. Thailand also withdrew its ambassador.

These measures will remain in force until Cambodia gives a full explanation for its inaction against the rioters, compensates for the damage and punishes the culprits, the letter said.

Thailand's national carrier, Thai Airways, suspended its flights to Phnom Penh at least until Monday. Thai authorities ordered all border crossings closed, and rounded up 67 illegal Cambodian workers for expulsion.

In Bangkok, hundreds of Thais demonstrated all day outside the Cambodian Embassy. They burned the Cambodian flag and pulled out the brass seal and lettering on the embassy's wall, but dispersed after the national police chief read an appeal for calm by Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Crowds returned after dark, but were kept away from the embassy by a large numbers of police. *AP*


MOTORCYCLISTS look up at an almost burnt out building which housed Thai companies' offices in Phnom Penh, Jan. 31. The Cambodian government said Thursday that it had arrested 150 "extremists" and announced it would pay compensation for violent anti-Thai riots as it sought to repair relations with a furious Bangkok.

AFP

Seoul sent $200M to Pyongyang, auditors discover

SEOUL—South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and his "sunshine" policy of engaging North Korea drew strong criticism Friday after government auditors found Seoul secretly sent millions of dollars to Pyongyang.

Local media urged the president to answer allegations that the cash was a payoff for a summit with his reclusive North Korean counterpart three years ago.

Kim won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his efforts to end the hostile relations with North Korea following the summit.

"The focus is whether the money was paid as a reward for Pyongyang to come to the summit table in June 2000," the moderate JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said in its editorial.

The editorial called on Kim to come out with the truth: "He cannot brush aside this allegation. He will only become more pathetic when the National Assembly invokes its investigative power to get the facts out of him."

Facing the stunning disclosure on Thursday of the transfer of some $200 million to the North right before the summit, President Kim quickly invoked the national interest and simply said that it would be "inappropriate" to call the transaction illegal.

South Korea's other leading newspapers, including DongA Ilbo and Chosun Ilbo, gave cold responses to the president as well.

"If it is confirmed to have bribed North Korea, our North Korea policy should be revised from top to bottom," DongA Ilbo said in its editorial.

A contributed commentary of Chosun Ilbo said: "Even the President cannot exist above the law and must take equal treatment as other people in front of the law. That is the basic principle of the law."

The Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) said Thursday it found a South Korean firm had secretly sent 223.5 billion won ($200 million) in a state bank loan to North Korea just before the summit.

BAI investigators said the money was "used to finance projects in North Korea" without going into details.

The money was part of a 400 billion-won loan extended to Hyundai Merchant and Marine from state-run Korean Development Bank a week before the summit.

The opposition Grand National Party has long claimed that President Kim Dae-jung and his government secured the unprecedented inter-Korean summit with a secret cash payoff for North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

President Kim's aides have strongly denied such claims.

The South Korean leader has been under fire from his critics who say his North Korea policy offers too much to Pyongyang for too little in return.

President Kim saw his policy suffer another setback last week when his special envoy Lim Dong-Won, a former unification minister and top adviser on North Korea, returned without meeting with Kim Jong-il. *AFP*

Crime rising in Singapore as number of jobless soars

SINGAPORE—Singapore faces rising crime this year amid record-high unemployment, a prominent lawyer said Friday.

Five people have been murdered since the beginning of the year in tightly controlled Singapore, which prides itself on its reputation as one of the world's safest cities.

"Five murders (in one month) is a little high for Singapore. When things are not going good, people tend to lash out more over small things," said criminal lawyer Subhas Anandan.

"Whenever there is (an economic slump), there will be a rise in crime."

Unemployment has hit a 17-year high of 4.8 percent, as the island-nation of 4 million struggles with its worst-ever economic downturn.

The overall crime rate is likely to rise by 10 percent for 2002, Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng said earlier this month.

In July, police said the crime rate rose 10.4 percent in the first half of the year. Overall crime fell by 12.8 percent in 2001.

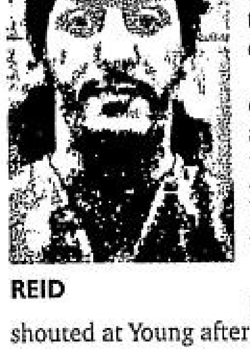
Wong also said the number of young people involved in crimes increased by almost 50 percent to about 4,000 from 2,800 the previous year.

Police are expected to release 2002 crime statistics next month. *AP*

'Shoe bomber' draws life in jail

BOSTON—Richard Reid, a British-born follower of Osama bin Laden, was sentenced on Thursday to life in prison for trying to blow up a trans-Atlantic flight with explosives stuffed in his shoes.

A defiant Reid, who pleaded guilty in October to all charges stemming from his failed attempt in December 2001, told Chief US District Judge William Young that he was a soldier "at war" with the United States because it sponsored the "rape and torture" of Muslims.


REID

"You are not a soldier in any war. You are a terrorist. To give you that reference, to call you a soldier gives you far too much stature," Young told Reid.

The Briton gestured menacingly and shouted at Young after the judge handed him the maximum jail sentence, fined him $2 million and issued a stern rebuke of his actions.

"Stand him down," Young ordered federal marshals as they dragged the towering shoe-bomber from the courtroom.

Pointing at Young and the American flag hanging in the courtroom, Reid replied: "That flag will be brought down on the day of judgment and you will see in front of your Lord and my Lord and then we will know."

The exchange capped a tense sentencing hearing during which three crew members from American Airlines Flight told of the psychological scars they still bear from Reid's bid to bring down their aircraft as it flew from Paris to Miami on Dec. 22, 2001.

Passengers and crew overpowered the British citizen as he tried to ignite explosives in his athletic shoes. He was tied up with belts and headphone cords, and the plane landed in Boston under escort from fighter jets.

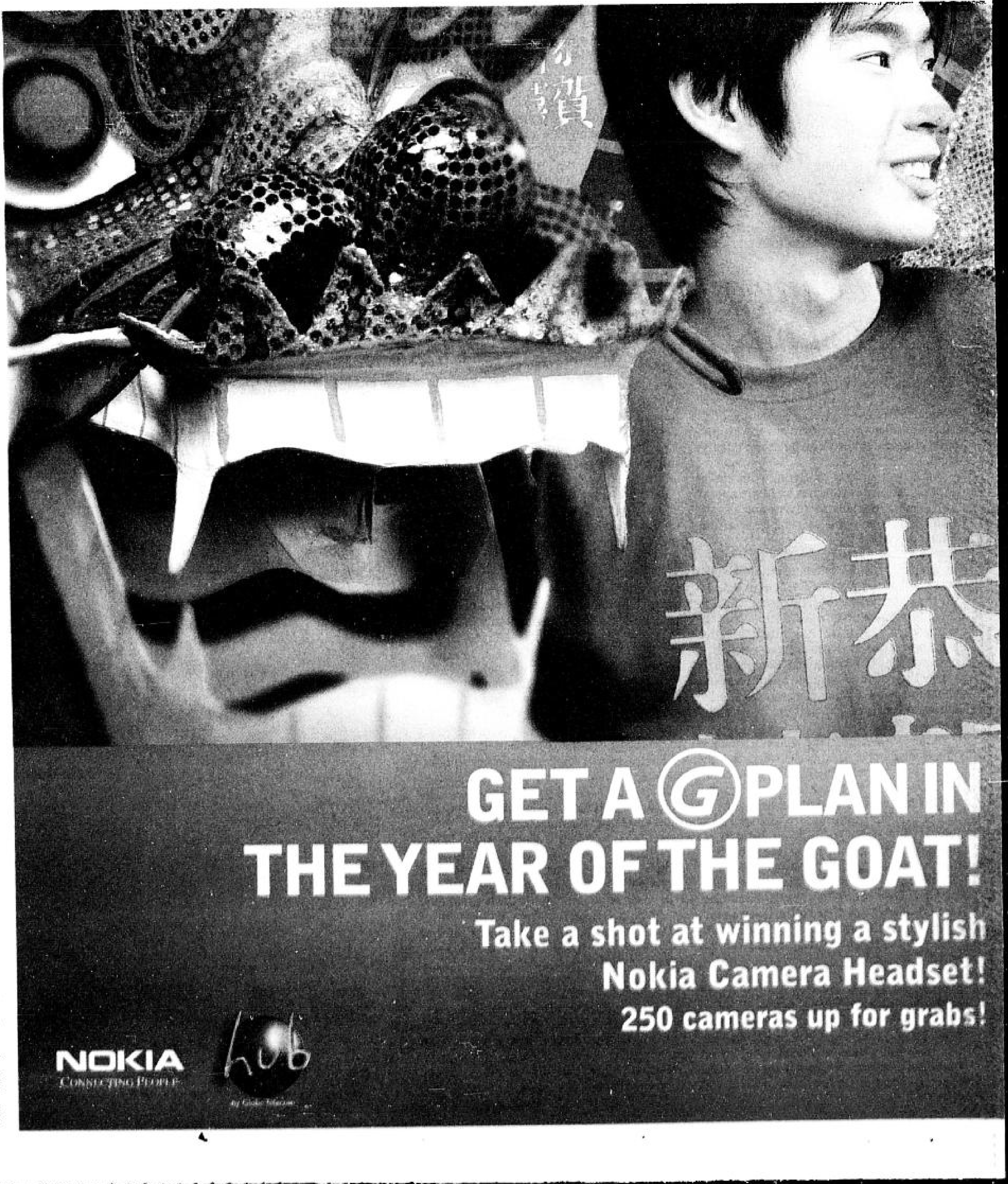
The near-disaster occurred at a time of heightened security and anxiety about air travel in the United States and throughout the world after the hijacked airliner attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Carole Nelson, one of three Flight 63 crew members allowed to speak at the hearing, said she still sees in her mind the panicked looks in the eyes of the 20 or so children on board the flight after Reid tried to ignite bombs in his shoes.

"Richard Reid was on a mission of evil, a mission of destruction and a mission of murder," Nelson told the court, saying Reid should spend the rest of his life in prison.

US government officials welcomed the sentence dealt to Reid.

"The sentence imposed on Richard Reid says to the world that terrorists cannot escape American justice," US Attorney General John Ashcroft said in a statement. "We will hunt them down, stop them and we will put them away." *Reuters*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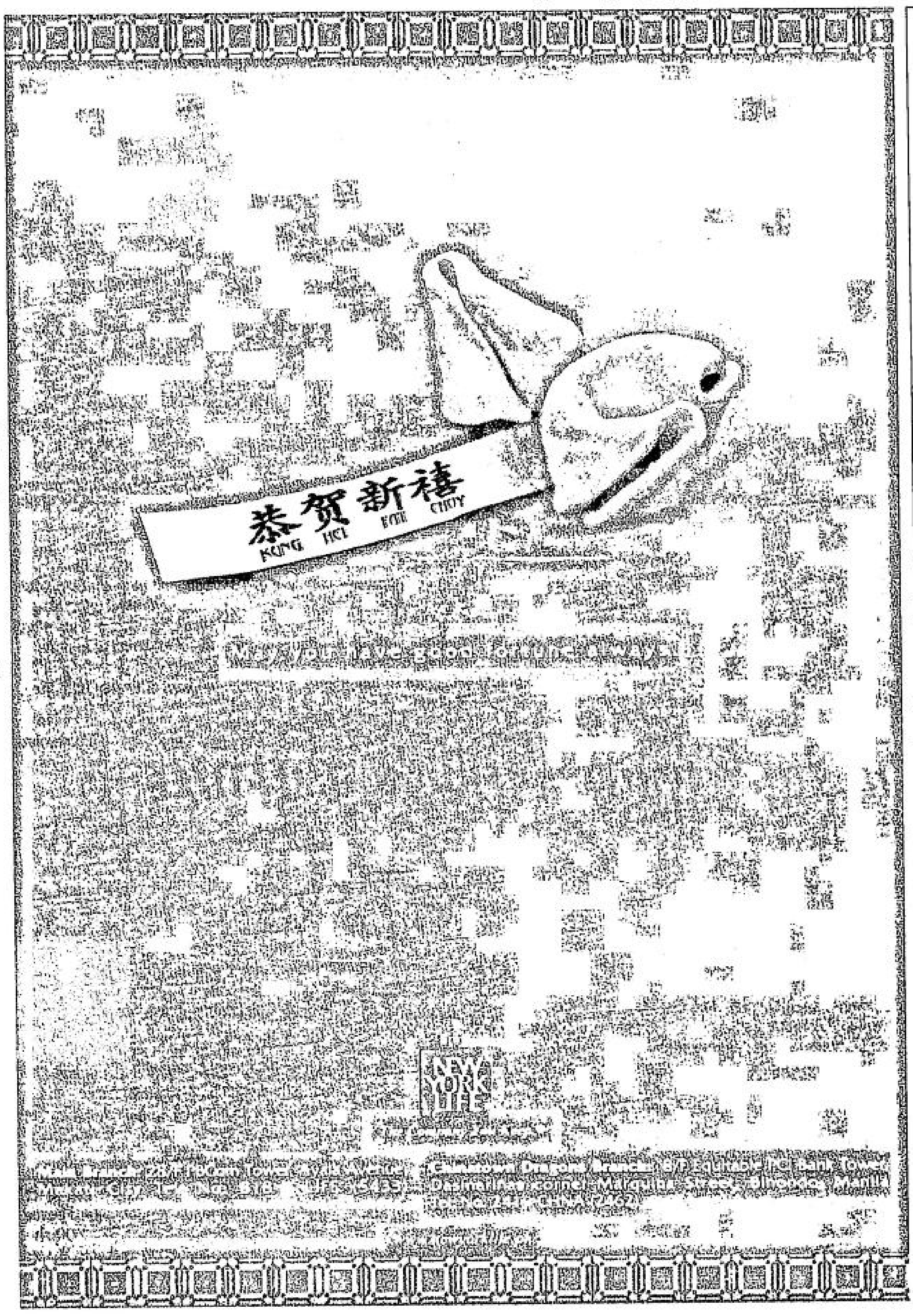
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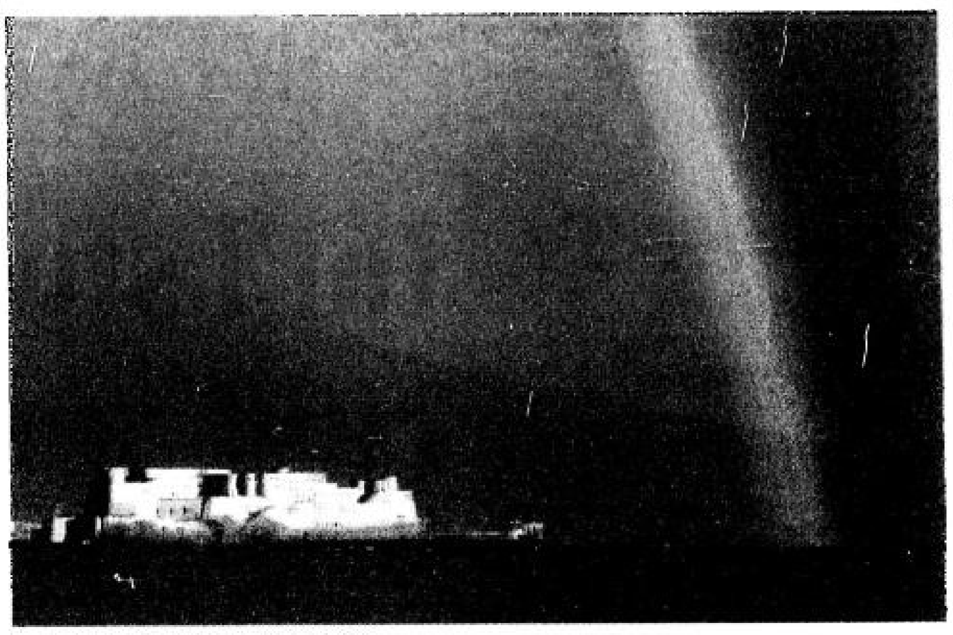

RAINBOW AND VESUVIUS
A ray of light hits the Castel dell'Ovo castle while the end of a rainbow reaches the horizon after a heavy storm hit Naples, southern Italy, Jan. 30. In the background is the beginning slope of Mt. Vesuvius. AP

BBC REPORT

Al-Qaida built 'dirty bomb' in Afghanistan

LONDON—Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network successfully built a crude radiological device known as a "dirty bomb" in Afghanistan, the British Broadcasting Corp. has reported.

British intelligence agents found documents that showed al-Qaida members had built a small device near Herat in western Afghanistan, the BBC said Thursday, citing unidentified British government officials.

Britain's Foreign Office said Thursday that the report substantiated expert opinion that al-Qaida wanted to develop a nuclear weapon.

"The evidence presented in the BBC report speaks for itself," a spokesperson told The Associated Press. "It provides proof to substantiate expert opinion that al-Qaida was interested in developing nuclear weapons."

In Washington, a US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Bin Laden was no doubt interested in acquiring a "dirty bomb"—a conventional bomb capable of spreading radiation.

But the US official said, "We have no evidence to substantiate that he's built such a device."

The British intelligence agents did not find the device itself and it has not since been recovered, BBC reported.

But scientists at the British government's weapons research facility in Porton Down concluded that al-Qaida had succeeded in constructing a small "dirty bomb" in Herat—based on documents and material uncovered by the British military and intelligence, the BBC said.

The scientists did not believe al-Qaida had been able to develop a full-blown nuclear device, it said. The report did not say when the device was thought to have been developed or how much radiation it could spread.

British officials showed some of the documents—including diagrams—to the BBC, the report said.

As part of the operation, British agents infiltrated al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan, posed as recruits and reported back, BBC said. *AP*

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Chavez plans nationalization of agriculture

CARACAS—Saying he wants to "deepen the economic revolution" Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced Thursday his government would seize state-owned agricultural storage facilities used by private businesses and redistribute idle land.

The leftist-populist president, facing a two-month-old general strike by opponents who accuse him of ruining Venezuela's economy and creating a communist dictatorship, said he was determined to "transform the socioeconomic model and its structures."

In a speech to a group of farmers and food producers, Chavez said his government would create a state-owned corporation to control food storage and production of fertilizer.

He also promised to redistribute one million hectares of idle land to needy farmers, and require banks to provide loans to finance cultivation of that land.

Earlier, Chavez's government reacted coolly to an opposition proposal to end the strike, with a top official neither endorsing nor rejecting the plan.

"The fact that we respect all the actions within the constitution to obtain the goals of one sector of the nation does not mean the government must endorse the initiative," Foreign Minister Roy Chaderton told Union Radio.

The government "has no interest in undoing itself, either by seeking early elections or by any change of government even within the constitutional framework."

Chaderton's comments were the first official reaction to an opposition proposal for a constitutional amendment shortening Chavez's mandate and scheduling early elections, along with the reinstatement of fired executives of the state-owned oil company, a key battleground of the strike which began Dec. 2.

Ali Rodriguez, president of Petroleos de Venezuela, said 5,100 of the company's more than 38,000 employees had been fired. Chavez wants prosecutors to file criminal charges against sacked employees who have led the strike.

The constitutional amendment was proposed by former US president and 2002 Nobel Peace laureate Jimmy Carter, who also proposed holding a recall referendum Aug. 19, halfway through Chavez's six-year term.

The two proposals were to form part of discussions here by diplomats from Brazil, Chile, Mexico, the United States, Spain and Portugal—the six nations forming a "Group of Friends of Venezuela."

The meeting, which follows similar discussions in Washington last week, was expected to give an new impulse to negotiations aimed at ending the volatile political turmoil.

The business, labor and political leaders heading the strike have pledged to pursue it until they obtain an ironclad agreement that would make it possible to vote the leftist-populist president out of office. *AFP*

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ROUNDUP

Traffic ordinance

DUMAGUETE CITY—The city council has asked Mayor Agustin Perdices to suspend the implementation of an ordinance requiring all southbound and westbound public utility vehicles to use the new integrated bus and jeepney terminal starting Feb. 1 to avoid clogging traffic to the south because of road repairs in the towns of Bacong and Valencia. Vallacar Transit Inc., operator of Ceres Liner, also made the same request as the implementation of the ordinance would force them to vacate their newly cemented passenger and bus terminal in Barangay Calindagan.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

New industrial center

TABACO CITY—The local government of this city is offering Natunauan Island as the new site for the development of a multi-industrial center in the Bicol Region. Tabaco City mayor Alex Burce said the site is very suitable for the establishment of various industries. He said the local government is actually trying to encourage multinational investors to help develop the island, which could be the major link of business industries between Bicol and the southern Visayas and Mindanao regions. Natunauan Island is about 100 meters from the main shore of this city.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Charges vs farmers

NAGA CITY—A leader of a militant farmers group claimed that landlords have resorted to suing farmers to evade land reform. Imelda Lacandazo, vice president of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), said that from agricultural dispute cases, the landlords have filed even murder charges against land reform beneficiaries. Lacandazo said the new tactic to discourage farmers' claims on agricultural lands had worsened the agrarian situation in the countryside.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Pension increase

NAGA CITY—Retired government employees have complained of an unannounced reduction in their pensions after the Government Service Insurance System apparently cut 5 percent from their pension increase on their monthly take. Sandy Hubilla, retired municipal treasurer and core group organizer of pensioners in Camarines Sur, said government pensioners here received only 5 percent of the 10 percent increase the GSIS gives to government pensioners.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Guards shoot inmate

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Guards at the provincial jail here shot and wounded an inmate after they caught him trying to escape on Tuesday. Inmate Exequias Tulingan Jr., 41, who is facing multiple parricide charges, walked casually past two guards then ran toward the national highway. He was shot in the abdomen after he ignored warning shots. Tulingan, a former Army soldier, claimed "spirits" had been ordering him to get out of jail and go home to his wife.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cop shoots driver

BALANGA CITY—A policeman assigned to Camp Crame in Quezon City shot and killed a tricycle driver here on Sunday night. Police identified the policeman as PO1 Raymond Ramos, 26, a member of the Drug Enforcement Agency. Reports said Ramos was driving his Mitsubishi Adventure van when he noticed that tricycle driver Allan Reyes was tailing him. Ramos then confronted Reyes and a quarrel ensued. Police said Ramos was provoked to shoot Reyes when Reyes tried to open the door of his van.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ex-village chief killed

ANGADANAN, Isabela—Three armed men ambushed and killed a former village official and two others Monday night in Barangay Patpat here. The victims, former Patpat Village Chair Domingo Cadauan, his live-in partner Alma Ibarra and his four-year-old son Abe Jay Cadauan, were aboard a tricycle and were on their way home at about 6:30 p.m. when three men shot them at close range, according to police. Investigators recovered 20 shells of M-16 Armalite rifle from the crime scene. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bombs recovered

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Explosives experts recovered four World War II-vintage but still deadly bombs in a populated village in Nueva Ecija on Tuesday, Army reports said. The bombs—two 81MM mortar, a 60MM mortar and a projectile 76MM—were discovered by residents of Barangay 1st in San Jose City, according to Lt. Col. William Campos, chief of the Army's 71st Infantry Battalion. An Army team retrieved the bombs and was still searching for an appropriate site to detonate these. Each bomb has a "wide killing radius," officials said.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Bulacan bans smoking

MALOLOS CITY—The provincial government has banned smoking in all government, private and public areas in Bulacan. Gov. Josefina de la Cruz has designated environment officers, policemen and barangay officials in each town in the province as enforcers of the ban. Fines ranging from P500 to P2,500 and the cancellation of business permits will be imposed on violators.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Int'l study says RP ecological ruin among worst in the world

CEBU CITY—The country has scored low in the results of an international study on pollution worldwide that measured levels of pollution and environmental destruction in 142 countries across the globe.

According to the Environmental Sustainability Index, the Philippines is 117th among 142 countries that suffer from heavy pollution.

This information was revealed by Sen. Loren Legarda and was culled from the study spearheaded by a team of experts from the United States' most prestigious universities in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The study is aimed at helping environmentalists gain a comprehensive overview of the conditions and state of the environment in various parts of the world.

According to the results of the study, Legarda said, Finland is leading in the list of countries that has the least pollution and is considered one of the countries that could sustain its industries with the least damage to the environment.

Legarda, who spoke at an Earth Week 2003 forum sponsored by the University of San Carlos here on Thursday, said environmentalists have identified specific "hot spots."

She said once a country is classified as hot spot area, it would signify "a high level of alertness on the serious threats of species loss and habitual destruction."

Legarda said the study showed that the Philippines leads the list of hot spot areas in the world, and one of countries with the most devastated environment.

These declarations were based on findings that 80 percent of the nation's coral reefs are damaged while 90 percent of the country's original rainforest has disappeared, she said.

She also said cyanide and dynamite fishing are the top causes of destruction of the country's marine life.

The senator also cited the study's findings on problems concerning waste and garbage. She said in Metro Manila alone, more than 6,000 tons of garbage is generated everyday. The absence of sanitary landfills compounded the magnitude of the garbage problem in the metropolis, she added.

Legarda said that despite the implementation of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2002, "the results have not been very encouraging."

In her speech before students of USC, she urged the youth to be responsive to the call to help protect the country's natural resources and the environment.

Jolene Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau

Linguists tracing links between China, RP languages

BAGUIO CITY—An Igorot language scholar has asked China's help in unearthing the language links between Chinese dialects and the vernacular of indigenous Filipinos in the Cordillera.

In a world poised for war, Ibaloi linguist Dr. Eufronio "Morr Tadeo" Pungayan said the root languages could prove the racial and genetic kinship of most Asian peoples, and establish a unity "borne by genuine brotherhood and not just motherhood statements."

Pungayan delivered a thesis on the potential language roots between Filipino mainstream and indigenous languages like Nabaloi of Benguet, and Cantonese, Fookien and Mandarin during a Wednesday forum that showcased Chinese-Filipino history for the Chinese New Year celebrations.

He handed to Charles Cheng, a doctor who dabbles in historical archiving, and Peter Ng, a Chinese-Filipino civic leader, the 96-page thesis on the Chinese archetypes in Filipino languages like Tagalog, Cebuano, Kapampangan, and Pangasinense.

Cheng and Ng will deliver Pungayan's study and request to the Chinese consul general, who was expected to attend Spring Festival rites here yesterday.

Pungayan had been teaching Nabaloi here for years as a "universal business language" to interested Ibalois.

He said he had fairly mastered 29 conversational foreign and local languages.

He said the indigenous language uses words that are ensconced in Mandarin, Cantonese or Fookien vocabularies, and which have made several Ibaloi-speaking businessmen transact huge deals with their Chinese counterparts.

The Ibaloi language makes for a convenient economic tool because of its many benefits, he said.

"In fact learning all languages helped me get discounts in the market. When I encounter a Pampanga trader, I speak to him in Kapampangan and I get my discount. If she is from Pangasinan, I also converse in the dialect, and I get my discount," he said.

The Ibaloi phrase "*Gwai da-kai shi tai-tai*," for example, means "There's an old man on the bridge," although each word is also part of the Mandarin dictionary.

But Pungayan said the Mandarin translation that uses the Ibaloi sentence structure would run a meaningless message: "Blame unwrap West Mrs."

The Ilocano phrase "Yes, go over there (*Wen, mai kan to djai*) translates to "Ask sell see move narrow" in Mandarin, because this dominant North Luzon language also bears striking Chinese words.

Pungayan said 15th century text by Spanish travelers described the Igorots (Cordillera tribesmen) as descendants of Chinese adventurer and pirate Limahong, which was how present-day scholars account for the language similarities.

But he said anthropologists have long theorized a racial kinship between Igorots and Chinese migrants to the Philippines from as early as the 12th century. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DENR stops return of ancestral lands to 2 Mindanao tribes

By Christine A. Gaylican

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Elisea Gozun stuck to her decision to suspend the distribution of lands to a group of Maguindanaoan-B'laan tribes in South Cotabato until a full review of the land distribution program.

Gozun yesterday said she deemed it necessary to review the decision issued by her predecessor Heherson Alvarez to make sure that the lands would go to their rightful owners.

She recently called for a review of the validity of a July 2001 Supreme Court decision recognizing the tribal groups' ownership of 923 hectares of land in South Cotabato.

Gozun said she welcomes the initiatives taken by the tribal groups and urged them to be tolerant as she and the agency double checks the certificates of land transfer.

The Alcantara Group, which has various businesses in Mindanao, owns the 923 hectares of land.

Leaders of the B'laan and Maguindanao tribes said in a recent press briefing that they hope Gozun's move would not be in favor of the Alcantaras.

Maguindanaoan Datu Nasser Pendatun, Al Hadj, spokesperson of the two tribes, urged Gozun to implement the decision of former Alvarez enforcing the Supreme Court's final ruling that the 923 hectares of pastureland belonged to the B'laan tribe.

"The Alcantaras have already profited from the operations of this pastureland for over 30 years," said Pendatun. "We want to use the land for the benefit of our tribe instead of cattle."

There are around 250,000 Maguindanaoans and B'laans concentrated in the uplands of North and South Cotobato, Davao del Sur, and Sultan Kudarat.

Since President Manuel Quezon declared South Cotobato a settlement area, waves of settlers have pushed back the tribes to remote areas. Settlers have taken over large areas of ancestral lands and used them as pasture areas for their cattle business.

Nicasio Alcantara, brother of newly appointed Public Estates Authority Chair Tomas Alcantara, was granted a Forest Land Grazing Lease Agreement (FLGLA) covering 923 hectares of ancestral land in Sitio Lanton, Barrio Apopong, General Santos City, South Cotobato. The tribes have fought in the courts since the 1960's to have these lands returned to them. Nicasio is also an appointee of President Macapagal-Arroyo and now the president of oil giant Petron Corp.

After the passage of the Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997, the tribes' rights over the 923 hectares were strengthened. The Alcantaras have fought to keep the lease agreement, which was to expire in 2018. But the Commission on Settlement of Land Problems (Coslap), the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court have all rendered decisions canceling the lease agreement in favor of the B'laans.

On Nov. 22, 2002, more than a year after the Supreme Court's ruling, Alvarez gave the final approval for the B'laans and Maguindanaoans to occupy their ancestral land.

Fire guts house in Biliran just as power supply goes on, off

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
PDI Visayas Bureau

NAVAL, Biliran—Fire gutted a house on the eve of this town's fiesta Thursday night, when the local electric supply also frequently blinked like off-season Christmas series lights.

At around 10 p.m., fire struck the house of Ambrocia Alarde, 76, on Vicentillo Street in Ilaya District of the poblacion.

The fire sent fiesta revelers inside many houses out into the streets.

The burned nipa-and-wood house was built on a lot about 10 meters away from neighboring large houses.

At the time, Alarde's daughter, Teresa, 52, was asleep inside the house. She was roused from sleep by the heat and suffered from burns in the right arm. She was rushed to the Biliran Provincial Hospital for treatment.

Concerned neighbors rushed to the house to look for the semi-invalid Ambrocia when the fire broke out. It turned out that she was reveling with neighbors in a nearby house.

She said that all the electric lights were off when she left the house a few minutes before the fire. But she left a kerosene lamp for lighting.

She said she believes a gust of wind probably knocked off the lamp and caused the fire.

Firemen arrived at the scene some 15 minutes after the fire started. Some of them looked like they were soused with alcoholic drinks.

They failed to respond to urgent telephone calls to the fire station. Their telephone line, along with that of the local police station, has been cut off for months now for unpaid bills.

The fire was put out by 10:30 p.m.

A fire also struck the same district about two years ago. It also gutted a house and was put out by local residents aided by the inclement weather. The local fire truck was then out of order.

The fiesta eve fire marked another sad episode for the Alarde family. On fiesta eve last year, Ambrocia's son, Domingo, was killed during a stabbing incident.

Hunt on for terror suspects in Cebu

CEBU CITY—Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña ordered the police to verify the reported arrival in Cebu of three suspected terrorists from Mindanao.

Osmeña, quoting an intelligence report that he got from Mindanao, said the suspects were sighted somewhere in Cebu City in mainland Cebu or Lapulapu City on Mactan Island on Wednesday.

He said the report said the alleged "terrorists" belong to a splinter group of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"They were last seen (on Wednesday) in Cebu City but it's not yet confirmed, they might be somewhere in Lapulapu City," the mayor said Thursday.

Osmeña said the report he got, with pictures of the suspects, did not state when the group arrived in Cebu.

Photocopies of the photos were distributed to the various precincts of the city police headed by Supt. Josephus Angan, according to city information officer Nagiel Banacia.

The mayor also gave copies of the photos to reporters from the three Cebu news dailies for possible publication and identification of the suspected terrorists.

Banacia said the mayor got the intelligence report from Iligan City.

Osmeña said while the information still has to be verified, he wanted to immediately alert the public to make sure that Cebu City would remain safe from terrorists.

"I will not take any chances. We just want people to identify them because we want to bring them in for questioning," Osmeña said.

Angan said he immediately relayed the mayor's information to the regional police. Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID7) chief, Supt. Augusto Marquez said they have started looking for the suspects on Mactan Island.

Marquez and Angan said they also received a similar report of terrorists arriving in Cebu sometime last year. The report, however, turned out to be false.

Marquez said aside from the arrival of MILF members, the intelligence report they got last year also included the supposed plan of some Abu Sayyaf members to sabotage the Sinulog Festival.

Hadji Nashir Ismael, chairperson of the Metro Cebu Muslim Peace and Order Council, promised to help police verify the presence of these persons.

Ismael gave assurances that Muslim communities in Cebu are against terrorism. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Maids join call for amendments

LEADERS of Filipino workers' groups in Hong Kong yesterday joined the chorus for the immediate passage of amendments to the anti-money laundering law being delayed in Congress.

In a statement, the Global Villagers Club (GVC), a group of Filipino workers in Hong Kong, said they find it suspicious that legislators are not moving fast on the amendments.

"I believe that these lawmakers know the possible repercussions to us OFWs . . . should they fail to act on the needed amendments on or before Feb. 12," said Nita Alvarez, head of the GVC, and a native of Bacolod City.

OFWs expressed fears their remittances would be restricted should Congress fail to amend the anti-money laundering law.

The Philippines is being required to lower the amount of deposits to be questioned from P4 million to P500,000 under anti-laundering rules.

Village execs say they're left out in unity efforts

THE HEAD of an organization of 42,000 village leaders has expressed apprehension that barangay officials would be left out of efforts to concretize President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for national unity.

"We might be ignored again," said James Marty Lim, national president of the Liga ng mga Barangay (Liga), in a press statement.

The indifference felt by Lim and his 42,000 fellow barangay chairs all over the country traces its roots from decades of neglect by the national government.

The most sweeping measure to address the concerns of barangays was the Local Government Code which effectively gave the barangay an identity, character and powers of its own.

But the efforts have fallen short.

"The trouble of the past empowerment process is that the roles assigned to us were not accompanied by funds," said Lim, a barangay chair from Marinduque.

"We are ready to play our role," said Lim, but the role of barangays in the process should be first recognized.

"The barangays can be the lead disseminator of the reform agenda with 41,939 barangays spread all over the country," he said.

Lim said he and tens of thousands of barangay officials are just waiting to be tapped.

Puerto airport plan faces delay

THE EXPANSION and improvement of the Puerto Princesa airport faces more delay after two financing institutions withheld funds to a Singapore firm that gave the lowest bid for the project.

Sum Cheong Construction Pte. Ltd. said although the Department of Transportation and Communications has certified that it was capable of undertaking the project, the European Investment Bank and Asian Development Bank withheld funds over reports that an investor of Sum Cheong had abandoned the project.

But the DOTC in a report said the firm had taken over the shares of that investor and it was capable of finishing the project.

Sum Cheong submitted a bid of P1.63 billion, while the next lowest bid was P1.99 billion given by German firm Bilfinger + Berger AG.

In a November 2002 resolution approved by Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, the DOTC Prequalification, Bid and Awards Committee (PBAC) said the department could not justify the P363.5 million difference between the lowest bid and that of the second lowest bid.

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Fiesta Tsinoy 2003 Schedule of Activities in Metro Manila

Chinatown New Year Celebration
January 31, 4:00 p.m.
Binondo Church, Manila
Manila's Filipino-Chinese district will usher in the Chinese New Year with a Parade and Chinese cultural performances in Binondo. The 4 p.m. procession will start at the corner of Quintin Parades and Ongpin Streets and culminate at the Binondo Church for the variety show rendered by the ***Chinese Jiang Su Overseas Troupe of Artistes and Performance*** *composed of mostly kids from the performing arts: Multi-opera show; Martial arts exhibition; Acrobatics; Soprano number; Folk song and Chinese musical instruments ensemble; Magic show by the world's tallest living man (8 feet tall; International folkloric dances with Philippine musical background*

Chinatown Food Festival
January 30 - February 2 • Binondo, Manila
Four days of food and drinks with participating establishment offering Chinese delicacies, snacks and meals for only one hundred pesos (P100.00).

Makati Fireworks Display
January 31, 6:00 p.m.
Sta. Ana Race Tracks Parking Area
Fireworks display donated by the Makati private sector in celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Fiesta Tsinoy
February 1, 7:30 p.m.
Baluarte Plano Luneta de Sta. Isabel in Intramuros, Manila
Within the historic walls of Intramuros, catch the Chinese Jiang Su Overseas Troupe of Artistes and Performance welcome the Year of the Goat with their best repertoire.

Fireworks Display
Weekly, starting on February 1, 9:30 p.m.

Film Showing
- February 1 and 13, 2:30 p.m., Kaisa Heritage Center
  Film Title: The Road Home (Commercial)
  Chinese Spring Festival (Documentary)

Photo Exhibit
February 1-28
- Hemudu Photo Exhibit
  Venue: Ground Floor, Kaisa Heritage Center
- A Day in Lhasa Photo Exhibit
  Venue: Second Floor, Kaisa Heritage Center

Makati Chinese Food Festival
February 3-7
Glorietta Activity Center
Makati City welcomes the Year of the Goat in cooperation with Ayala Center and all Makati-based hotels by offering Chinese delicacies. Ribbon cutting is set on February 3, 11:00 a.m.

Puppet Show by the **Jin Jiang Puppet Troupe**
February 21, 7:00 p.m.
Venue: Awat-king Auditorium, Kaisa Heritage Center

For inquiries on the ***Fiesta Tsinoy 2003*** *Activities, please call:*
Philippine Convention & Visitors Corporation
Travel Trade - Asia Pacific Department
Tel: 525-7320 • 525-9318 to 27 loc. 263
Email: ttu@dotpcvc.gov.ph • pcvcnet@dotpcvc.gov.ph

Chinese New Year Celebrations at:

Century Park Hotel
- On sale: Special Tikoy & selection of Chinese Delicacies at the Atrium Lobby & Deli Shop from January 24 to February 2
- Chinese Calligraphy & Painting Demonstration at the Atrium Lobby from January 31 to February 2
- Chinese New Year Food Promotion at the Atrium Lobby from January 31 to February 2
- Ceremonial Dragon & Lion Dance at the Harrison Plaza entrance of the hotel on January 31
- Performance of the Philippine Institute of Quezon City Chinese Orchestra (PIQC) at the Atrium Lounge on February 1
- Demonstration from Century Tai-ji Association at the Atrium Lounge on February 2

Dusit Hotel
- Buffet lunch and dinner of Chinese dishes at the Café Restaurant on February 6 & 7

Manila Galleria Suites
- Chinese Food Fest at the Raphael Café Restaurant on February 1 & 2
- Professional Fortune tellers a the Lobby Lounge on February 1 & 2
- Lion & Dragon Dance at 2 PM on February 2

The Heritage Hotel Manila
Dates: January 23 - February 1
- Special Lunar New Year Buffet at the Restaurant Riviera
- Lion Dance & Coin Tossing at the Lobby
- Yu Sheng Salad Tossing at the Restaurant Riviera

Holiday Inn Resort Clarkfield
- Festive traditional Lion Dance to drive away evil spirits and bring good luck and prosperity for the coming Year.
  Date: February 1, 11:00 a.m.
- Chinese hawker stations will offer a selection of Chinese delicacies at the poolside while the Mequeni Café promises sumptuous buffets for lunch and dinner
- Fortunes and Goodies: availability of Chinese foodstuffs and fortune telling at the Mequedeli
  Dates: January 27 - February 7

Fontana Leisure Park (Clarkfield, Pampanga)
- A festive Lion Dance Performance

Grand Seasons Hotel - Legenda Suites
(Subic)
- "God of Wealth" Appearance
  Venue: Legenda Hotel Casino & Lobby
- Lion Dance & Casino Lucky Games

Laoag Escapade
Date: January 31
Fort Ilocandia commemorates the Chinese New Year with Dragon performers from Taiwan and affordable packages starting at US$100.00 that includes choices between a Laoag City Tour or round of golf and Vigan or Pagudpud tour plus free entrance to Casino Filipino.

Casino Filipino's Kung Hei Fat Choi Celebrations
Have an exciting and colorful Chinese New Year Celebration at the Casino Filipino outlets with Chinese cultural dancers on the following dates:
- Casino Filipino Silahis
  Jan. 29 & Feb. 1, 9:00 p.m.
- Casino Filipino Pavilion
  January 30 & February 2, 9:00 p.m.
- Casino Filipino Parañaque
  January 31 & February 3, 9:00 p.m.
- Casino Filipino Cebu
  January 31 & February 1, 9:00 p.m.
- Casino Filipino Mactan
  January 30, February 1 & 3, 9:00 p.m.
- Casino Filipino Davao
  January 31, 8:00 p.m.

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Harmonizing people and environment

By Jo M. Clemente
Concepcion, Iloilo

SMALL fisherfolk of Barangay Bagongon in Concepcion, Iloilo, set out to drop artificial reef modules at certain spots of the Visayan Sea within the village's Marine Protected Area. JO CLEMENTE

TRAVEL Iloilo via the Philippine Tourism road map and you'll be ushered into its annual Dinagyang Festival. Take the road less traveled and you'll find yourself in Concepcion town at the northern end of the province, a two-hour drive from Iloilo City.

And in this town where there is more water than land, the sea becomes their highway as much as their farm. There's hardly any traffic but hardly any fish, too.

The island village of Bagongon is, however, a community aspiring to preserve what is left of its marine life. The people patrol their sea lanes against illegal trawlers and rebuild their sea farms by passive fishing, laying out artificial reef modules and observing closed season for specific species—a practice they have been doing the last three years to bring harmony between their community and their natural resources.

From a distance, the island looks like a giant clam, which is why it is called Bagongon. It takes a 45-minute boat ride from the municipal wharf to reach the place. When the tide is low, boats can't reach the shore and one has to waddle in the water and bear small pricks from sharp edges of tiny stones, crushed shells and weeds washed ashore.

At first, these things don't add up until one learns more about the village and its people.

The tiny stones and crushed shells are rubbles of reefs from down under—of what used to be a spawning area even a sanctuary for small fish so they can grow bigger before they land on the dinner table.

The weeds are actually sea grass. And in this part, denudation can well apply to the seabeds.

Low tide

For Bagongon, low tide more than describes the level of the sea. It is a measure that secures their lifetime.

"We learned to measure sea grass in quadrants and grade the reefs through the manta tow method," said Lani Amesan, a member of the barangay council of Bagongon.

[The manta tow method, according to residents, involves fishers who, wearing goggles, inspect the seabed by dunking themselves into the water, down to as far as their bodies can reach without falling over the boat.]

Amesan and several other council members were given basic training on environmental assessment two years ago by a team from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas. The group was commissioned by the Save the Children-US (SC-US), a nongovernment organization supporting communities in these parts since the 1980s.

Amesan said they went to Guimaras for the training and had enriching experiences. They never really knew these before although they have lived by the sea all their lives, she said.

One need not ask about the results of their environmental assessment. It was enough to see and even join members of the community that day as they laid out at sea a set of artificial reef (AR) modules.

The modules were cylindrical structures that looked like drainage culverts, except that they were bigger and perhaps heavier at 500 kilos apiece and bore holes in the sides.

The modules were placed on a raft while a Bantay-Dagat pump boat pulled off the raft to the open sea. The fishermen led by Goody Gabayeron, who chairs the fisherfolk association, dropped the modules at sites they had identified earlier with the help of the UP training team.

About 150 AR modules would cover the spot, the cost of which is split three-ways: 50 were paid for by the SC-US, 50 by the town government and the barangay, and 50 by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

"I've been fishing in this area since I was seven," said Gabayeron, 40. "Then, there were plenty of fish even close to the shore. We only use a '*baroto*' (small boat with paddles). There were even '*badlon*' [*talakitok*] here, now we hardly see them even when we go farther out in the sea," he recalled.

The fisherfolk blamed their dwindling fish catch on commercial fishers and trawlers. The nets dragged at the bottom of the sea also destroyed the reefs and other marine life, including the sea grass, they said, but they never really realized until the training how these related to their main source of livelihood.

Community action

In time, Gabayeron said, they decided to organize and do something. "These AR modules are one of many steps," he said. "We also sought the help of the barangay council in declaring our part of the sea as a Marine Protected Area (MPA)."

Barangay chair Rene Gabayeron said the proposal was discussed and eventually passed by the council. "We forwarded this to the Sangguniang Bayan of Concepcion and this was also approved," he said.

Thus, in this part of the Visayan Sea, 200 meters from the lowest low tide on shore of Bagongon, no one is allowed to fish or extract anything alive. The measure is meant to give the sea some rest and to allow the fish to spawn and grow, the seagrass to take roots once more, and the ecology to attain a certain balance.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing, said Gabayeron. Some fisherfolk, especially those who do not have boats, resisted the MPA. Eventually though they joined in when they realized the measure was for a common good, he said.

Through the Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council, the fisherfolk were deputized as fish wardens and authorized to arrest those who encroach on the protected area, as well as commercial fishing vessels that poach in the municipal waters (15 km from the shore).

Passive fishing

Two hundred meters after this is a buffer zone where some qualified fishing—described as "passive fishing"—is allowed, using only hook and line to catch the fish and on paddled boats. Beyond this, the fishermen can move about in their motorized pump boats.

The people also observe closed seasons for specific types of species. Between October and March, for example, they do not catch "*tabagak*" and they look out for violators.

To make up for the long months that they cannot fish for *tabagak*, the association set up a small enterprise to add value to what they already have. This season, it started buying the catch from their members and dry the fish themselves.

Tabagak, when dried, is what is popularly called "*tuyo*."

The people also started to ferment *dilis* to produce *patis* (fish sauce).

Had there been improvement in their catch since three years ago? The barangay chair, Rene Gabayeron, is optimistic: "The squids are now back," he said.

Making the link

Amesan was quick to add though that as they did all these, they also noted the growing number of people in their village.

Exaltation Gabayeron, a barangay health worker since 1985, knows that the population growth rate in their area is higher than the national average and that this situation aggravates the sustainability of their natural resources. It is this situation that brought the SC-US to Bagongon and two other coastal villages, Nipa and Loong, pilot sites of their People and Environment Co-Existence Development (Pescodev) Project.

The project is an attempt to bring about a sustainable balance between population and natural resources through reproductive health and coastal resource management—a link recognized by Dr. Raul Banias, mayor of Concepcion.

"We grow by three babies a day," Banias said. The town has a population growth rate of 2.79 percent higher than the national average of 2.36 percent and Iloilo's 2.1 percent.

"It stretches our resources; it stretches our services. We should have a strong program addressing population and if we do not do it now, all our efforts at poverty elimination will just be negated by increasing population," the mayor said.

Are they managing both? The women of Bagongon said yes.

Exaltation Gabayeron and Janeta Currento are family planning trainors of Pescodev. As they had been BHWs for a long time, the project wasn't new to them but provided another dimension in the government's family planning program because of the regular sessions they conducted.

Couples are encouraged to attend the sessions and visit the barangay health center once they decide to accept family planning. During these sessions, family planning is also discussed in relation to the locality's natural resources.

As most of the couples took part in their environmental assessments, the link is easily understood.

Statistics provided by Dr. Helen Minguez, municipal health officer, indicated a marked increase in the number of family planning acceptors in the three project areas the last two years.

Still in all, there is no easy way to achieve a perfect balance or harmony between people and their natural resources.

Like the road to Bagongon, there is no shortcut, but as this community chose to finally paddle its own boat, still the waves and create the ripples, this makes their journey as important as their destination.

It's Getafe, not Jetafe

By Chito A. Fuentes
Tagbilaran City

WHAT'S in a name? Or more appropriately, what's one letter in a name?

To the people of Getafe town in northern Bohol, it strikes at the core. The very reason why the present leaders want no less than congressional action to ensure that the town's name is spelled right, that is with the initial letter "G" instead of "J" which is how some continue to spell it to this day.

Resolution No. 85, which was approved by the municipal council of Getafe in Bohol headed by Vice Mayor Cesar Fuentes, adopted unanimously and endorsed to the provincial board a 1990 council resolution restoring "the original orthography" of the town's name from Jetafe to Getafe.

The latest council measure asked the provincial board to send its own resolution to the Philippine Historical Institute and, "if again favorable," to furnish a copy to Congress.

So just how did "G" become "J" in the first place?

The 1990 resolution, approved during the incumbency of the late Mayor Ruben Fuentes (father of the incumbent vice mayor) provides some interesting information.

According to Councilors Victoriano Suello and Domingo Torremocha, who sponsored the resolution, it was a Spanish missionary named Fr. Diego Ruiz who was instrumental in the town's founding into a "*pueblo*" and who gave the name Getafe.

They claimed that Ruiz, who came to the Philippines with Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, was a native of Getafe, Spain.

"(S)ince then to the end of the Spanish epoch and until the early years of the American regime, the name Getafe with initial letter 'G' was used, as shown in the history account dated as early as 1855 in the National Archives, Manila, as well as in the resolutions and ordinances and all official records and documents in the municipal government and in numerous church records in the local parish," the resolution revealed.

Records

These records, from the "Libro de Bautismos" in 1876 to 1899, and the 317 "Libro de Bautismo" entries from Page 1 in 1914 to Page 160 in 1916, showed that the spelling was Getafe with the letter "G."

The 1990 council resolution also noted that the town's cattle brand bore the initials "MG" for "Municipality of Getafe."

A thesis titled "The Historical Development of the Town of Getafe and its Implication to Education," written by Maria Teresa Aparicio-Fuentes in 1985, revealed that the town, formerly named Ambacon, was founded in 1855.

THE MUNICIPAL building of Getafe, Bohol. CHITO FUENTES

She based the information on a letter written by the Bishop of Cebu to the Governor-General of the Philippines on Aug. 4, 1884.

"The pueblo of Getafe was created civilly in the year 1855, separating from the pueblo of Inabanga of which it forms part . . . ," the bishop was quoted in his letter, with the English translation supplied by Aparicio-Fuentes.

In her thesis, Aparicio-Fuentes wrote that the first alteration on the spelling of the town's name was noted in the Actas on March 29, 1909 in the recording of the minutes of the municipal council and official communications.

Confusion

Similar to what Aparicio-Fuentes wrote in her 1985 thesis, the 1990 council provided an explanation on where the confusion started.

"[A] painstaking research to dig up [sic] the cause of how it happened that the spelling Getafe was changed to Jetafe revealed that this change was not a deliberate official act. It was due to the caprice or inadvertence of the municipal secretaries as evidenced by the varying spelling either Getafe or Jetafe in their writings," it alleged.

The resolution supported this argument by pointing out that Acta No. 19 series of 1909 used Getafe; Acta No. 13 series of 1910 used Jetafe; Acta No. 15 series of 1910 used Getafe; Ordinance No. 4 series of 1910 used Jetafe; Acta No. 13 series of 1911 used Getafe while Acta No. 13 series of 12 all spelled it Jetafe.

In the light of these facts, the council concluded that the change of spelling from Getafe to Jetafe was not exactly due to an official act and that the true spelling of the town's name should be Getafe.

Jerry isn't Gerry

Commenting on the spelling fiasco, former Getafe mayor and now poblacion barangay chair Cariso Camacho said a change from "J" to "G" was the proper thing to do.

The vice mayor went even further. "It is like spelling a Gerry with Jerry. More than the difference of one letter, it actually means Jerry is a different person from Gerry," Fuentes said.

More than just a change of one letter, it is actually giving justice to the person who founded the town and the considerations that made him decide on the name, he said.

"It is not just about Getafe, Spain after which the town is named. It is about our roots," Fuentes said.

For a little town, a little difference means a lot.

Old unresolved stories, bigger controversies

BREAKAWAY

Ivan Suansing

IT'S a little late in the day to be cataloguing events that made waves in the year just passed. But there are old, unresolved stories that, far from receding irrevocably into the past, will likely develop into fresh and even bigger controversies in the months to come.

So we list some of them.

- The fall of the Dinagat lord:

Some seven months after government forces raided his hilltop lair on Dinagat Island, Surigao del Norte, killed 16 of his disciples and shattered his godly mystique, Ruben Ecleo Jr. is waiting for judgment day in a Cebu City jail. It promises to be a long wait.

Charged with parricide for the death of his wife Alona Bacolod in January last year, the supreme master of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) hasn't been arraigned until now.

Throwing every imaginable roadblock, Ecleo's lawyers have stalled his trial, a prospective media event that's expected to eclipse the prominence of the Chiong sisters' case in 1998. The Chiong case was hyped up as the trial of the last decade. The Ecleo case will be the trial of this decade.

The Supreme Court already rejected Ecleo's plea to be tried elsewhere, and flashed the green light for the start of the much-anticipated legal drama. But who will try this god? No less than someone with iced-water running in his veins. So far, two judges have backed off.

More charges may be forthcoming. Ecleo is also a suspect in the massacre of four Bacolod clansmen in June last year, and could be held liable for the deaths, injuries and damage as a result of his armed resistance to the police siege of Dinagat.

- The Cherry Augusto mystery.

Her murder in October last year didn't spell the end of the intrigue that had often hounded her storied existence.

A reinvestigation has not confirmed the initial theory: That a police suitor killed her in fit of jealousy before turning the gun on himself. That was just too neat and contrived.

Results of the reinvestigation tend to lean more on the possibility of foul play. Forensic evidence, like the trajectory of bullets and the location of wounds, suggests the presence of another gunman.

Meanwhile, the immorality case that Cherry Augusto filed against her husband Zandro's alleged paramour also refuses to die.

The Ombudsman in the Visayas has ruled that there was basis to investigate "the other woman," Assistant City Prosecutor Mary Ann Castro, who has since made public her relationship with Zandro.

All eyes will be on this enthralling story as it unfolds.

- The riddle of Cebu politics:

In the 2004 elections, who will end up with whom, representing what party for what position?

Gov. Pablo Garcia and former Rep. Celestino "Junie" Martinez Jr. are the acknowledged Lakas leaders in Cebu, but they are neither friends nor allies.

So, the governor anoints John-john Osmeña to succeed him. John-john, however, isn't a Lakas member; he's the son of Senator John, the worst nightmare of national Lakas officials.

Naturally, Senator John, who hates the governor's guts, doesn't want his son to run under Garcia's wings, and disowns the stubborn boy when he clings on to his personal ambition.

The older Osmeña then replaces John-john with an "adopted son," Bogo town Mayor Celestino "Tining" Martinez III whose father, the former congressman, is just waiting for a chance to throw a dagger into the senator's heart.

Ah, even President Macapagal-Arroyo finds Cebu politics too complicated. Who won't?

- The recall of Mayor Tomas Osmeña:

Will Alvin Garcia have an earlier crack at the mayor's crown?

The former mayor is keeping his hopes alive. But since the law doesn't allow a recall election within one year before a scheduled election, Garcia will soon realize that time isn't on his side.

Judging by the way—and speed—he's making enemies, Mayor Osmeña seems unfazed by Garcia's threat.

The mayor already declared war on sidewalk vendors who obstructed the flow of traffic. Now he wants to drive "undisciplined" jeepney drivers out of his city. Maybe that will win him another "best mayor" award.

Who's next?

JDV: I'm alive, dancing Cha-cha

From page A1

Cha-cha (Charter change), and play golf," De Venecia said in a press statement yesterday.

Newsrooms were in a frenzy on Thursday night after rumors spread that De Venecia had been rushed to the Makati Medical Center and had either died of a heart attack or was in critical condition. A check that night showed that he was indeed brought to the hospital but only to undergo what he said was a "routine executive checkup."

He told the INQUIRER the report about his death was exaggerated.

"I have no cancer, no heart attack, no stroke. And my heart is strong," De Venecia said in his statement yesterday.

He, however, admitted that he had mild chest pains but that his doctors told him that he was only "overworked."

The Speaker was discharged from the hospital yesterday afternoon.

De Venecia said President Macapagal-Arroyo called him up after he entered the hospital and that he assured her that he was "in good shape."

Among the government officials who visited him in the hospital were Senate President Franklin Drilon, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Sen. Robert Jaworski, Representatives Robert Ace Barbers and Prospero Pichay and Videogram Regulatory Board chair Ramon Revilla Jr.

De Venecia said he started feeling chest pains early Thursday evening after a meeting with Manila investment bankers on the amendments to the comprehensive tax reform package. He held another meeting with officers of the Bankers Association of the Philippines led by former Finance Minister Cesar Virata.

De Venecia said a series of medical tests he underwent under the supervision of his cardiologist, Dr. Roberto Anastacio, showed that he had a "very healthy heart."

Bicam approves bill on absentee voting

From page A1

Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate panel in the conference committee, said at a press conference yesterday that the draft law would be submitted next week to both houses of Congress for ratification and to President Macapagal for signature.

He said the President had pledged full support for the measure.

Angara, who also chairs the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws and electoral reforms, said the two panels were able to break the impasse on two major provisions and to reconcile the conflicting versions.

The final draft allows all overseas Filipinos to vote. Even immigrants can vote, provided they pledge to resume actual physical residence in the Philippines not later than three years after registering as absentee voters.

The so-called "sunset" provision in the House version, which allows the law to operate only in the 2004 national elections, was removed. The new provision calls for a mandatory review of the law within two years after the 2004 elections to allow for proper amendments.

But the final draft does not sit well with two members of the bicameral conference committee.

Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen said he and Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat would vote against ratification.

He said he and Lobregat, as well as some members of the minority, did not agree with the inclusion of Filipino immigrants and permanent residents abroad among those allowed to vote.

He said this was in violation of the constitutional provision stating that only Filipinos who have been Philippine residents for at least one year are qualified to register and vote in national elections.

Sen. Joker Arroyo also described the final draft as full of constitutional infirmities.

Arroyo, the lone lawmaker opposing the proposed law, echoed Dilangalen's observation that the provision allowing the vote to Filipino immigrants and permanent residents abroad as unconstitutional.

"That [draft law] is a hybrid, and anything that is a hybrid is mongolized," he said.

He added that he would still vote against the final version, and that he did not expect any of his colleagues to join him because it was a constitutional issue.

'Worth the wait'

But Angara described the measure as "worth the 15 years of waiting" by overseas Filipinos.

The other salient provisions of the draft law are:

- Absentee voters can vote for president, vice president, senators and party-list representatives.
- Registration shall be done in person.
- Documents other than a passport may be used in registering as a voter, provided some mandatory information and personal details are acceptable.
- Use of campaign materials as well as the limits on campaign spending shall be governed by laws and regulations applicable in the Philippines. Personal campaigning is not allowed.
- Absentee voters shall personally cast their votes in Philippine embassies and consulates.
- Voting by mail shall be allowed in not more than three countries, and upon approval of the congressional oversight committee.

Angara said the bicameral work started several weeks ago.

He said the two sides initially stood firm on their versions but that "on Wednesday, the two chambers showed that no vast difference would come in the way of passing good legislation."

'Unfaithful'

Dilangalen, however, said the controversial provision in the draft law would "throw out all existing Philippine jurisprudence on permanent residence in relation to elections."

He cited as an example a Supreme Court decision prohibiting US immigrants from registering and voting in the Philippines because they lacked residence in the country.

He contended that Filipinos who chose to change their status abroad not only lost their residence or domicile in the country but also became detached to the issues here.

"Let us be faithful to the Constitution and various jurisprudence," he said in a phone interview.

Negros Occidental Rep. Jun Lozada, the principal author of the House version of the absentee voting bill, said the bicameral conference committee did face a deadlock early on over the provisions allowing Filipinos residing abroad permanently to vote in the 2004 elections and voting by mail.

"But this is all behind us now," he said in a statement. "We don't anticipate any more hitches because the bicameral conference committee is just finalizing the provisions of the bill."

Lozada said the Senate and the House might ratify the bill as early as Monday, leaving the President to enact it into law "shortly after that."

"With the passage of the landmark proposed law, the 12th Congress will go down in [our history] as the Congress that empowered the millions of overseas Filipino workers to choose the leaders that will lead this country to success and prosperity," he said.

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Rebel gov't dispenses swift justice

From page A1

in areas controlled by the CPP-NPA," said a resident who agreed to speak with the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity.

Anyone in the village who breaks the law or simply commits wrongdoing will have to face the group through the *hukuman bayan* or people's court.

"It's not the village captain or members of the Sangguniang Pambarangay but the GSM members who will investigate the case, try it and then decide on it," said the source, who is not a CPP/NPA member.

But strictly speaking, the people's court is hardly that.

Only members of the GSM may serve as jurors in any case brought to it. Residents who are not party members cannot take part in the proceedings, except when their testimony is deemed relevant and they are summoned as witnesses.

Each case is decided through a simple majority vote.

But Capt. Ramon Rosario, deputy chief of the 2nd Civil Relation Group based in Camp Nakar here, described the people's court as "the biggest joke in the judicial concept of due process."

"The 'kangaroo court' of the communist terrorists acts as prosecutor, judge and executioner rolled into one," Rosario said, adding:

"How can an accused secure an impartial trial from this people's court when what is always on trial is the communist system? The members of that court would have to leave a mark on the consciousness of the people that its system really works for the aggrieved and the oppressed."

From petty to grave

The judicial process at the people's court starts with the filing of a complaint by the aggrieved party with any member of the GSM.

The complaint may involve a petty misdeed (such as theft or carabao rustling) or a grave crime (such as murder, rape, or betrayal of the revolutionary movement).

If investigators find valid ground for the complaint, the accused will be summoned to appear before the people's court.

It is futile to ignore the summons. If the village council has its barangay police, the GSM has its *militiang bayan* to arrest the accused and bring him/her before the convened GSM members.

"It would be more troublesome for any suspect to hide and evade arrest by the *militiang bayan*," said the source. "If one chooses to do so, the regular members of the NPA will do the arrest. And it would be hard to escape because they will surely get you."

Upon the reading of the complaint to the accused, the GSM will assign a party member to serve as *abogadillo*, a lawyer of sorts, to assist the accused in understanding the supposed crime.

But unlike in a regular court, the *abogadillo* is not called upon to get the accused off the hook. The merits of the case are decided solely on the basis of the testimony of the complainant and the witnesses and the rebuttal of the accused.

The pace of the trial is fast, but the people's court can only recommend decision to the next GSM level—the district unit composed of party members in at least three or four municipalities.

This setup is designed to prevent a biased decision at the village level because of the kinship factor, the source said.

The district GSM will review the case and, if warranted, sustain the decision of the village level. Depending on the gravity of the crime, the case could even reach the CPP national office before a decision is sustained for enforcement.

And if the trial is fast, enforcement of the sentence is faster.

In a rape case, if the victim's age is lower than 12 the trial is only ceremonial and the punishment of death by shooting is swiftly enforced.

"Sometimes the family of the rapist can retrieve the body, sometimes not," the source said.

In some cases, the decision of the people's court is *destierro*, wherein the convict and family are ordered to leave and stay away for a certain period. Or it can be *destierro* in reverse, wherein the convict is strictly confined to the place.

Discipline

The source said that for the village residents, the existence of the people's court had somewhat served as deterrent to crime.

"It reminds the people to obey and observe laws," the source said. "It solicits discipline or else..."

Luis Jalandoni, a top official of the CPP's political arm, the National Democratic Front, writes: "All officers and men of the [NPA] are prohibited from committing the slightest damage against the interest of the masses, and they are always subject to the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points of Attention."

In serious crimes such as murder and betrayal of the movement, death in the hands of the NPA is the sure verdict, especially when the accused is a party member or a cadre of the guerrilla unit.

According to the source, the trial can be compassionate or seething with fury. But it is carefully decided with dispatch, and no special consideration is accorded the accused.

"Especially if the complaint deals with the basic tenets of the NPA, the people's court is strict, bloody and brutal sometimes," the source said.

But Captain Rosario showed the INQUIRER a video documentary containing testimony of former NPA rebels assailing the people's court.

"We don't know where to go," said one Ka Liway of Tagkawayan, Quezon, whose husband was shot dead by NPA rebels inside their house and in front of his family.

She added: "If we remain NPA, we will be hunted by the military. If we turn to the government, we will be killed by our former comrades. Where will we go?"

It was supposedly the people's court that sentenced Liway's husband to death.

The documentary also features unedited footage of the NPA "purge" in the 1980s wherein party members suspected as spies and traitors by fellow comrades were executed.

"The NPA people's court killed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of their comrades on the mere whim or caprice of the court members," Rosario said. "Even the former chieftain of the NPA, Romulo Kintanar, was not spared. Who will be the next victim?"

Kintanar was shot dead Jan. 23 at a restaurant in Quezon City. The NPA has claimed responsibility.

But in the CPP's "Guide for Establishing the People's Democratic Government," it is stated: "Freedom of the person of citizens is inviolable. No citizen may be arrested without sufficient legal basis.

"The people's court shall require specification of charges and sufficient investigation of the case prior to trial and shall always inquire into the side of the complainant as well as the accused. The opposite sides of any case shall be given ample hearing and shall be entitled to counsel as well as the presentation of witnesses and evidence."

Rebs mete out death penalty to 4 gov't spies

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The National Democratic Front announced here Thursday that the rebel movement had sentenced to death four persons, including a military officer, whom the New People's Army took captive in 2001.

Jorge Madlos, NDF spokesperson for Mindanao, told dxMD Radyo Agong that the sentence was issued after the "people's court" found Marine Sgt. Jeremias Rosete and alleged government civilian assets Pepito Simbulan, Herminia Sorongon and Wilfredo Maldecir guilty of spying on the rebel movement.

Madlos said the Far Southern Mindanao Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines recently convened the people's court to try the case against the four captives.

He said the CPP's Central Committee upheld the verdict.

Firing squad

The NPA normally employs a firing squad to carry out death sentences on its prisoners. Those who are "at large" are tracked down and executed.

But Madlos could not confirm whether Rosete and the other captives were still alive. He said he did not know where they were being held.

Rosete and the three others were taken captive sometime in September 2001 in Colombio, Sultan Kudarat, while they were on their way to negotiate the surrender of some NPA guerrillas.

Local government officials led by Sultan Kudarat Mayor Pakung Mangudadatu tried to persuade the rebels to release the captives, to no avail.

Sen. Loren Legarda later added her voice to calls for the captives' release.

In July last year, CPP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison assured Legarda that the captives would not be harmed and would soon be freed. He said only the continuing military operations in Sultan Kudarat and some parts of North and South Cotabato were hindering the release.

But Sison's promise was overtaken by events. Shortly after his talks with Legarda, the government withdrew from peace talks with the NDF.

GMA still visiting Iloilo on Saturday

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will still visit Iloilo as scheduled on Saturday, despite her sudden decision to go to Kuwait, according to a palace source.

In the morning she is scheduled to launch her administration's roll-on/roll-off transport project in Iloilo City.

Around noon she will fly to Concepcion town to launch her Kalahi anti-poverty program and deliver a power barge for Panay island.

She heads back to Manila and fly to Kuwait early Sunday morning.

Gloria flying to Kuwait

From page A1

clemency for a Filipino convict in Kuwait.

Ople said the original itinerary was for the President to proceed to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates but the President decided to return to Manila after her visit to Kuwait.

A total of 1.4 million Filipinos are working in the Middle East.

Members of the Presidential Security Group hurriedly left last night for Kuwait to secure the places she would visit.

Palace officials kept under wraps the details of the sudden trip citing "security concerns."

Ambassador Roy Cimatu, who heads the Middle East Preparedness Team, left late last night to make preparations for the President's visit.

The President will check on evacuation plans for the OFWs working in the emirate in case of a US-led attack on Baghdad, Cimatu said.

He added that several places had already been identified as assembly points for the OFWs once the order for evacuation is issued.

Scheduled to leave last night with Cimatu were Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and Foreign Undersecretary Jose Brillantes.

Sudden decision

Despite the imminence of war, Ms Macapagal would not be dissuaded from going to Kuwait. She firmed up her decision on Thursday night after meeting with top Palace officials of the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told reporters.

"We value our OFWs and we feel this is the time that they need our presence. This is one way of the President to show her personal concern for them," he said.

Bunye said he will be with the President's delegation, which he said is a "small group."

Only the Palace in-house media will cover the trip; no private media members had been invited.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, who's in the United States, is not joining the trip.

Peacemaker

Bunye said it welcomed Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin's call on the President to be a "peacemaker."

"We are for peace. The last thing we want is a war in the Middle East," Bunye said.

He said the Philippines had been calling for the peaceful resolution of the US-Iraq arms conflict.

"We support the United Nations process and the case brought by the US before the UN because this is for peace in the Middle East and stability in Iraq under a realm of democracy and transparency," he said.

Bunye said the President's main concern is to ensure the safety of the OFWs.

"But least we forget, we also have an obligation to ensure their own safety, and mankind's safety, against weapons of mass destruction," he added.

PAL ready to fly Pinoys out of ME

By TJ Burgonio

PHILIPPINE Airlines will be tapped to evacuate thousands of Filipinos in the Middle East in case war breaks out in Iraq, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said yesterday.

Reyes said he had convinced PAL president Lucio Tan to make the planes available "should the need arise." He said he had also requested US officials to lend their aircraft and sea craft for the transport of Filipinos from "war-torn" to safer areas under the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA).

Guingona leads . . .

From page A1

divine intervention will soften the hearts of those involved in the current impasse in the Middle East.

"In the wake of preparations for a great armada in the Middle East, war seems imminent. Yet prayer and your Divine Response can soften hearts, enlighten minds and open windows of change," he said.

"Help us. Guide us. Strengthen our quest for truth and justice. And Peace," Guingona added.

The seven groups denounced the US policy on Iraq. "This war is not a question of removing Saddam Hussein. It is a question of invading a country, attacking another Muslim country," the groups said.

The statement was signed by representatives of the UP Muslim Students Association, the Muslim Youth National Assembly, Imustaphil, Bangsa Moro Youth Advocates, Iman, Islamic Light Movement and Muslim Philippines.

"The Empire of Evil has assembled its armory, stationed its war arsenal, and marched its hundreds of thousands of troops in the Gulf Region to begin its second phase of all-out war against the Islamic world. These aggressors will never prevail and they are destined to fail," they said.

They noted that the US attack would likely happen after Feb.13 or after the Hajj to Mecca and Eid-al-Adha.

The crowd was made up of different groups—from Bagong Alyansang Makabayan member organizations, the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, Pro-Life Philippines, the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines, Muslim Philippines Solidarity for Iraq, Peace Camp and San Beda students.

While militant groups shouted "Peace!" during the rally, Muslims shouted "Allahu Akbar! (God is great!)"

"No justice; no peace. US out of the Middle East!" chanted the ralliers, many of whom were nuns.

Also spotted in the crowd were Pastor Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs and so-called running priest Robert Reyes.

The first secretary of the Iraqi Embassy arrived with his wife and three kids. They carried an Iraqi flag and pins with pictures of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Fundamentalist threat

Manuel said Filipino Muslims were already enraged when Ms Macapagal announced that she was backing up America's policy against Saddam Hussein.

"We, Muslim leaders in the country, are afraid they (fundamentalists) would direct their anger or retaliation to innocent Christian Filipinos," he said.

"We (are) again calling on the President to seriously reconsider her position, the Philippine government's position, in order to avert an impending disaster," he said.

Manuel, also the leader of the Tri-People Coalition of Davao Oriental, a group of Muslim, Christian and Lumad peace advocates, said withdrawing the government's support from the American-led war effort was best for the country.

"Because whether you like it or not, such a war has religious element. Many of the Muslims would interpret it as a religious persecution against Muslims by the United States. Definitely they will not take it sitting down if they saw their fellow Muslims being killed by the Americans. That would also explain why there was the New York attack," he said referring to the Sept. 11 disaster. ***With reports from Cynthia Balana; Ferdinand Zuasola, Charlie C. Señase, Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Ma. Diosa Labiste, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Bush: Disarming Iraq to take weeks

From page A1

"He's got to make that choice in a hurry," Armitage said.

During a meeting at the Oval Office with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Bush said he hoped "the pressure of the free world" would persuade Saddam to relinquish power.

"And should he choose to leave the country along with a lot of the other henchmen who tortured the Iraqi people, we would welcome that, of course," Bush said.

"No matter how Mr. Saddam is dealt with, the goal of disarming Iraq still stays the same, regardless of who's in charge of the government."

Baghdad had dismissed previous suggestions Saddam might go into exile.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal said the issue of exile did not come up during his meeting with Bush at the White House, and a senior administration official played down expectations for such an outcome.

US officials said Bush and Berlusconi discussed the "next steps" on Iraq. The talks will continue on Friday (in the US) when Bush meets British Prime Minister Tony Blair at Camp David.

Bush is turning to his closest allies for advice on whether to set a deadline for Iraq to give up its suspected weapons of mass destruction.

8 leaders back Bush

Meanwhile, Europe was left counting diplomatic wounds after eight leaders signed a joint letter backing Bush's tough line.

The open letter was signed by Blair, Berlusconi and the leaders of Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, Denmark and the Czech Republic. It called on the peace camp—implicitly Germany, France and Russia—to rally to the US fight against Iraq.

"The transatlantic relationship must not become a casualty of the current Iraqi regime's attempts to threaten world security," they wrote in the letter printed in several newspapers.

But Germany and France continued to press for more time for UN weapons inspectors to finish their hunt for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in Iraq.

German officials said it was "plain wrong" to say their country was isolated, and France insisted that all of Europe agreed on the need to enforce UN resolutions.

In Greece, which is also criticizing Bush's war plans, a foreign ministry spokesperson said the Greek EU presidency was not even informed in advance about the letter signed by the eight.

The Bush administration began an intense round of diplomacy, trying to convince reluctant allies and much of the American public that Saddam is an imminent threat that must be eliminated by force.

Leading up to what may be a crunch meeting of the UN Security Council on Feb. 14, the US must convince the doubters it has evidence Iraq has nuclear, biological or chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Blair, Bush's staunchest ally on Iraq, said the Gulf nation's disarmament was inevitable and Saddam could choose if it came about peacefully or by force.

High-level diplomacy was not restricted to Washington.

Blair, who has sent much of Britain's forces to the Gulf, was to meet Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar in Madrid before flying on to Washington.

Bush says he is willing to launch the big US invasion force now massing in the Gulf without further UN backing. But he is sending Secretary of State Colin Powell to the Security Council on Wednesday with more intelligence data in the hope of avoiding a bitter split with other big powers.

Other grounds

US officials have made clear they have other grounds for wanting to be rid of Saddam.

Bush had accused him of aiding Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida, the group Washington blames for the Sept. 11 attacks.

Military schedules and looming summer heat also lead many analysts to forecast that, barring surprises such as Saddam falling from power, war will begin within weeks.

"The Iraqis are on notice. They have probably until Feb. 14 before a decision will have to be made about bringing them into conformity with their international obligations," Canadian Foreign Minister Bill Graham said.

Canada has argued for giving UN inspections more time but seemed to be hardening its stance. *Reuters, AFP*

Arms inspectors say Iraq still not cooperating

WASHINGTON/BAGHDAD—The chief United Nations weapons inspector is complaining Baghdad had failed to increase its cooperation despite his stinging report earlier this week.

Chief weapons inspector Hans Blix said there was no evidence to suggest the Iraqis were granting inspectors greater access to key scientists they wanted to interview regarding Iraq's alleged arms programs.

Speaking to Britain's Channel Four Television News, Blix said there was still time for Saddam to cooperate.

Asked if the Iraqis had been more cooperative since Monday, when he criticized Iraq, Blix said, "No, not yet."

"There has been a good deal of helpful attitude from the Iraqi side on what we call process, that is to say on opening their sites. There has been no denial of access," he said in the interview.

"But what is missing is what we call cooperation on substance—their duty to try to provide us with explanations and with evidence on what may remain of their weapons of mass destruction."

Iraq has invited Blix for talks in Baghdad before his team reports back to the Security Council in mid-February.

An Iraqi Foreign Ministry statement said the meetings would focus on "discussing a number of issues related to strengthening cooperation and transparency" between the two parties.

Since renewing inspections two months ago, UN experts have come up with little hard evidence of weapons banned by UN resolutions passed after the 1991 Gulf War.

Chief nuclear inspector Mohamed ElBaradei has renewed his request for several months more to conduct searches.

He said his teams had yet to find a "gross violation."

On Feb. 14, ElBaradei and Blix will report again to the Security Council. *Reuters*

THE 18.61-METER high Rizal monument in Fujian province in China is taller than the one in the Luneta. It is made of the world-famous Jinjiang granite stones.

CHELO FORMOSO

Rizal enshrined in China

From page A1

the 12-meter high Rizal statue in Luneta, Manila.

Biggest outside RP

Built along a new 10-lane highway in rural Fujian and envisioned to be the biggest Rizal shrine outside the Philippines, the park will be the site of a massive Rizal museum and library. It is expected to be a must-see among the Filipino-Chinese, 80 percent of whom, like the national hero, can trace their roots to the Fujian province.

The national hero is the direct descendant of Chinese trader Cua Yi Lam, who immigrated from Siongque ("Zhang-Guo" in Mandarin Chinese) to the Philippines in the latter part of the 17th century. Church records show that Cua Yi Lam was baptized Domingo Lamco at the age of 35 in Manila in 1697 and that his birthplace was Siongque village in China.

Progeny

He eventually moved from the Parian district of Manila to establish his family and his business in Laguna. He married Inez de la Rosa, daughter of another trader who immigrated from China.

To spare his progeny from the Spanish regime's anti-Chinese policies, he changed the family name to Mercado. Domingo's son Francisco had a son named Juan, who in turn had a son whom he also named Francisco.

One of Francisco's sons, Jose Rizal Mercado, had to drop the family name when he entered the Ateneo because of his elder brother Paciano's close ties with the martyred Fr. Jose Burgos. Rizal turned out to be poet, novelist, physician, linguist, patriot, martyr and hero. The rest is history.

Funding

To return Rizal to his roots, the Jinjiang city government put up 10 million yuan (about P62 million) to fund the Rizal Park while Filipino-Chinese business and civic leaders under the coordination of Tulay Foundation chair Manuel Chua, donated 2 million yuan (about P12.4 million).

Filipino-Chinese business and civic leaders, notably Philippine Airlines chair Lucio Tan and Chua, spearheaded the fundraising for the Rizal shrine project.

The groundbreaking for the Rizal Park in 2000 was led by then President Joseph Estrada and his Cabinet secretaries.

Some 56 Rizal clan members and members of the Knights of Rizal were invited to grace the groundbreaking.

Filipino delegation

De Venecia led the wreath-laying ceremony honoring the national hero with Chinese officials Gong Qingkai, Jinjiang city mayor and party secretary, and Xue Zuliang, chair of the People's Congress of Jinjiang City.

Also in the Philippine delegation were Consul General Corazon Bajin, Rep. Roque Ablan, National Historical Institute chair Ambeth Ocampo, the Tarlac-based descendants of Rizal's sister Soledad, officers of the Knights of Rizal and Filipino-Chinese leaders and businessmen.

Warm welcome

City officials and schoolchildren welcomed the Philippine delegation with festive buntings and music.

After the floral offering at the foot of the newly constructed monument, the delegation walked to the inner village to visit the small one-room house with red-tile roofing that Rizal's great, great grandfather once called home. There the descendants of Soledad Mercado-Quintero lighted joss-sticks and paid homage to their Chinese ancestors.

Natividad M. Mendoza, granddaughter of Soledad, brought seven members of her family, including her son Genaro, who is currently mayor of Tarlac City, Nereo C. Mendoza, Virlane Sta. Ana Mendoza, Josefina B. Malvar, Stella Nimfa B. Mendoza, Ana Barbara B. Mendoza, Natividad M. Mendoza, Jose Noel Malvar Mendoza, Amelia Digna Malvar Mendoza and Maria Carolina B. Mendoza

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Quezon City

January 29, 2003

REVENUE REGULATIONS NO.4-2003

SUBJECT : Amending Certain Sections of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as Amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, Otherwise Known as the Revenue Regulations Governing the Imposition of Excise Tax on Automobiles.

TO : All Internal Revenue Officers and Others Concerned.

SECTION 1. SCOPE. - Pursuant to the provisions of Section 244 in relation to Section 245 . of the Tax Code of 1997 (Code), these Regulations are hereby promulgated to implement the provisions of Section 149 of Title VI of the said Code, imposing an excise tax on automobiles.

SEC. 2. THE DEFINITION OF TERMS. - Section 2 of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"(a) AUTOMOBILE – shall refer to any four- (4) or more-wheeled vehicle, other than a truck, pick-up, jeep/jeepney, bus, or vehicle used for special purpose, which is propelled by gasoline or diesel and specially designed to transport persons and not primarily to transport freight or merchandise. The term automobile shall also include utility vehicles and Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) designed to carry both passenger and cargo, except when the seating capacity thereof is at least 10 or more adult passengers, including the driver, subject to the criteria used in determining the seating capacity herein prescribed;

Provided that, notwithstanding any contrary rule, closed or covered *four-wheel* drive vehicle, primarily designed to carry passengers, regardless of the number of seats, shall be considered and taxed as an automobile for purposes of these Regulations.

Provided, finally, that ocular inspection must be conducted in all cases, taking careful consideration of the criteria stated in this sub-paragraph (a) for the proper determination as to whether or not said vehicle is an automobile. A written report of each ocular inspection must be prepared by the inspecting officer to enable the reviewing officer to determine whether the inspected vehicle meets the criteria of an automobile as defined in these Regulations.

The passenger seats must conform to the following rules and area specifications for the uniform application of the number of seats criterion:

1. Each seat shall be of a horizontal rectangular area with seat and feet space of not less than thirty-five centimeters (35 cm.) wide and sixty centimeters (60 cm.) long for each passenger, and fifty centimeters (50 cm.) wide and sixty centimeters (60 cm.) long for the driver or operator. Provided, in cases of contoured and bucket type-seats or with shapes other than the conventional horizontal rectangular form, seat width shall be measured at the middle portion thereof. Provided further, that for the corresponding space that will be occupied by any obstruction such as, but not limited to, doorside built-in armrest, overhead air condition duct, protruding amplifier box or wheel house, an imaginary straight line along the obstructed space shall be drawn, measured and deducted from the total width of the seat. The length of seats located at the front row shall be measured from the lowest point of the backrest in a straight and level line up to the dashboard. Moreover, the distance between the passenger shoulder level and the backrest of the seat in front shall always approximate the minimum length measurement prescribed herein. In cases of passenger seats facing opposite each other, the length of each passenger seat, representing one half (1/2) of the entire distance between the points where the inner edge of each seat will intersect with the lowest part of its backrest, shall likewise meet the prescribed minimum length.

2. The number of seats of an automobile as defined by these Regulations shall be determined by counting the number of seat spaces that meet the minimum area specifications prescribed herein. Half-seat shall not be counted as one passenger seat even if there are multiples of half-seats. Thus, a utility vehicle with nine (9) and one-half (½) seat or nine (9) and two (2) half-seats and so on shall be considered as an automobile subject to ad valorem tax. A contiguous row of seats shall have as many number of passenger seats as there are seat spaces that meet the minimum prescribed measurements. However, any seat space in excess of the aforesaid area specifications, if any, shall not be counted as one seat even if it meets the half-seat specifications of seventeen and one-half (17 ½) wide. In cases of contiguous row of seats with shapes other than the conventional horizontal rectangular form, each seat shall be treated individually applying the minimum prescribed measurements for such type of seats.

3. Aside from meeting the aforesaid measurements, the seat area must include the corresponding feet spaces, leg and head rooms as described herein that will afford an average-built adult passenger to sit. Any seat space without the corresponding feet spaces, leg and head rooms, even if it meets the area measurements, shall not be counted as a passenger seat.

   For this purpose, the feet space shall refer to the corresponding floor area of a passenger seat, upon which a sitting passenger normally rests both his feet. A passenger seat whose corresponding feet space is obstructed by a gear box shall be considered without seat space. Leg room shall mean that the passenger seat shall have enough elevation from the floor so as to allow the normal bending of the knees and positioning of the legs of a seated passenger. A seat laid down directly on the floor with only the seat itself providing its elevation from it or whose elevation is lower than the rest of the passenger seats thereby depriving the passenger to seat normally, shall be considered without leg room. Head room shall refer to the unobstructed ceiling space of a passenger seated upright. It shall be considered without head room if the ceiling or any side of the vehicle touches any part of the head of a passenger seated upright. These requirements shall be applicable to all seats of the vehicle.

   All seats, whether or not these are jump seats, fold-away or fold-down seats, shall be considered passenger seats if the intended passengers thereof will have access thereto through the side door(s) of the motor vehicle and that they are factory installed and meet the area specifications prescribed in these regulations; provided, that seats located at the rear portion of the vehicle normally utilized as cargo compartment and accessible through the back door shall not be considered as passenger seats if these are foldable or adjustable to allow for cargo storage even if the same are factory installed and meet the area specifications.

4. A factory-installed seat shall be considered as a seat if the intended passenger is seated comfortably thereat with his back, including his shoulder, fully rested on the back rest of the seat. Accordingly, a seat without its own back rest shall not be counted notwithstanding that such seat is factory installed and complies with the requirements on seat measurements, feet spaces, leg and head rooms.

(b) LIGHT COMMERCIAL VEHICLE (LCV) - shall refer to a motor vehicle, whether four-wheel drive or not, such as commuter vans; utility vehicles; Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs); and the like, except pick-ups.

(c) VEHICLE USED FOR SPECIAL PURPOSE - shall refer to a vehicle designed and used for a special purpose or for a specific application such as cement mixer, fire truck, ambulance and/or medical unit, armored military vehicle, crane, hearse, and the like.

(d) TRUCK - shall refer to a motor vehicle of 3.5 tons gross vehicle weight or more of any configuration that is primarily designed for the carriage of goods and with any number of wheels and axles.

(e) JEEP/JEEPNEY - shall refer to a locally assembled military type vehicle manufactured by local firms with no foreign affiliation, which is similar in appearance to the MacArthur or Eisenhower type with canvas or hard top shell. It shall also include locally assembled variant of the said vehicle primarily used for transport of passengers.

(f) BUS - shall refer to a motor vehicle of 3.5 tons gross vehicle weight or more of any configuration, which is generally accepted and specially designed for the public transportation of persons and with any number of wheels and axles."

Items (e) to (n) of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, are accordingly re-numbered as Items (g) to (p).

SEC. 3. AMENDATORY PROVISION ON AUTOMOBILES SUBJECT TO EXCISE TAX. - Section 4 of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SECTION. 4. AUTOMOBILES SUBJECT TO EXCISE TAX. – The excise tax under Section 149 of the Tax Code of 1997 shall be imposed on the production, assembly or importation of automobiles, including LCVs as herein defined, payable before removal from place of production/assembly or from Bureau of Customs' custody."

SEC. 4. AMENDATORY PROVISION ON THE REGISTRATION OF BRAND NAMES UNDER RR 14-97.- Section 10 of RR 14-97 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC.10. REGISTRATION OF BRANDS/MODELS AND VARIANTS . – Every manufacturer, assembler, producer, and importer of automobiles shall, before commencement of actual manufacture, assembly, production or importation, file with the appropriate BIR Office having jurisdiction over the taxpayer-registrant an application for brand/model registration. In cases where previously registered brands/models are modified, any modification shall be compared with the international version thereof as reflected in the original assembler's/manufacturer's certification and the published international catalogue, brochure or other advertising materials to determine whether or not such modified version conforms to the requirements of these Regulations. Accordingly, such modified version shall thereafter be registered with the appropriate BIR Office having jurisdiction over the taxpayer-registrant."

"xxx xxx xxx."

SEC. 5. AMENDATORY PROVISION ON MANUFACTURER'S OR IMPORTER'S BOND. - Section 12 (a) of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99, is hereby further amended as follows:

"SEC. 12. MANUFACTURER'S AND IMPORTER'S BOND.- Every manufacturer/assembler and/or importer of automobiles for sale shall post a surety bond which shall be conditioned upon the faithful compliance with laws and regulations relating to such business and for the satisfaction of all fines and penalties imposed by the Code.

(a) Basis of surety bond to be posted. -

(1) Initial Bond. - In case of initial bond, the amount shall be equal to one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000): Provided, however, that if after six (6) months of operation, the amount of the initial bond is less than the amount of the total excise tax paid during the period, the amount of the bond shall be adjusted to twice the tax actually paid for the period.

(2) Bond for the Succeeding Years of Operation. - The bonds for the succeeding years of operation shall be based on the actual total excise tax paid during the year immediately preceding the year of operation."

" xxx xxx xxx."

SEC. 6. TRANSITORY PROVISIONS. -

(a) The provisions of Revenue Regulations No. 14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 14-99 shall be applicable to all automobiles completely assembled or imported (Completely-Built-Up (CBU) units, including Completely-Knocked-Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked-Down (SKD) units), that are still in the custody of the Bureau of Customs or in the place of production, assembly plant or warehouse, as the case may be, as of the date immediately preceding the date the Regulations become effective.

(b) For this purpose, the following must be complied with:

(i) All importers and/or assemblers shall submit a duly notarized list of inventory on-hand of completely assembled automobiles or CBUs, including Completely-Knocked-Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) units, that are located within the assembly plant or warehouse or the customs' premises as of the date immediately preceding the date of effectivity of these Regulations, indicating the engine, body and chassis numbers thereof. The list shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, thru the Chief, Large Taxpayers Assistance Division II, within ten (10) days from the date of effectivity of these Regulations. Failure to submit the inventory list on the part of the importers/assemblers shall be construed that said importers/assemblers do not have any inventory on hand of CBUs, CKDs and SKDs as of the date immediately preceding the effectivity of these Regulations.

(ii) A stocktaking of the aforesaid inventories shall be conducted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue for purposes of validating the said list, within five (5) days from the date of submission thereof.

(iii) Prior to the date of effectivity of these Regulations per Section 8 hereof, an ocular inspection and measurement shall be conducted on the different brands/models of vehicles to determine whether or not such brands/models are considered automobiles as defined under the provisions of these Regulations.

SEC. 7. REPEALING CLAUSE. – Subject to the provisions of Section 6 (b) (iii) hereof, any provision of Revenue Regulations No.14-97, as amended by Revenue Regulations No.14-99, or portions thereof which are inconsistent herewith are hereby amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE. - These Regulations shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance

Recommending Approval.

GUILLERMO L. PARAYNO, JR.
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

Inquirer-I ch

FOUR DIGIT
7 6 6 2
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
8 7 5

MEGALOTTO 6/45
1 5 13 18 26 28

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Al S. Mendoza ● *Assistant Editor* Edwin M. Villanueva

International Junior golf on TV

TODAY'S Golf Power features the final episode of the four-part golf special on the 6th Samsung Philippine International Junior Golf Championship. Golf Power, now on its seventh year, is aired every Saturday, 2 p.m. on RPN-9 and is hosted by Gerard Cantada. The weekly golf program is produced by Joe Cantada Sports. It is sponsored by Samsung and Absolute.

GENT'S TOUR

Casas triumphs in 6-hole playoff

By Jong Arcano

SAN Miguel, Bukidnon—Felix "Cassius" Casas birdied the 18th hole six times yesterday, the last from a few inches away on the sixth hole of a sudden-death playoff that won him the Del Monte leg of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit presented by San Miguel Beer here.

Runner-up the past two weeks, Casas used up all the magical shots and putts in his bag to avoid another heartbreaker as the Southwoods pro edged a hard-luck Elmer Salvador and Richard Sinfuego in the longest playoff ever in the local tour.

Casas' first birdie on the par-5 18th from two feet in regulation play got him onto the playoff with Salvador and Sinfuego.

They ended up with similar 274 totals after Sinfuego rallied with a 67 and Salvador shot a 70 against the 72 of Casas.

Casas parried the axe of doom right on the first extension hole when a birdied putt that was no shorter than 50 feet traversed almost the entire length of the green and trickled into the hole, sending the huge gallery into a frenzy.

That spectacular putt put him on the next hole with Sinfuego and Salvador, who birdied from short range.

Canlubang leg champion Sinfuego sent himself out of the playoff after he just made par on the second extra hole which his two rivals birdied from tap-in distance.

After both exchanged birdies on their next two trips back to the 18th, Salvador seemed ready to end it all on after he pitched to within just six feet for his birdie, but missed.

On the sixth extra hole, Casas sent his second shot to the greenside bunker while Salvador left himself with a 20-yard third shot. But what was supposed to be a simple pitch turned into a disappointing lob that found the bunker for Salvador.

Casas pounced on that big opening to blast to within inches away for a sure birdie which became impossible to match for Salvador, who just could get himself out of the bunker.

"With all the breaks that went my way when I needed them, I felt I was bound to win it," said Casas, who pocketed the top prize of P100,000.

The winners received their prizes from Ogie Manalo, president of the organizing Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc., and Del Monte officials Jimmy Ong, Warfrido Boy Balandra, Mike Comique and lawyer Ramon Velez.

The final round scores:

274 - C. Casas 64-69-69-72, E. Salvador 68-62-74-70, R. Sinfuego 68-70-69-67
275- R. Pactolerin 70-66-71-68
279 - R. Pagunsan 68-67-71-73
280 - V. Santia 70-71-67-72, J. Opaco (am) 72-66-71-74
281 - R. Marcelo 68-76-68-69
282 - R. Jaraula (am) 71-68-67-76
284 - D. Zarate 74-68-69-73, R. Cuello 69-72-73-70
285 - E. Sanchez 70-69-72-74, R. Brobio

CASAS blasts out.

PDI PHOTO

Abap takes new partner

REVICON is the new partner of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines.

After the sudden pull-out of its erstwhile partner Caltex-Philippines, ABAP received a big boost with the entry of Revicon as its major backer in its continuing quest for the country's first Olympic gold medal.

"Revicon has been supporting us in the past but is now our chief corporate backer," said ABAP President Manny Lopez after the contract signing with Unilab marketing director Alvin So.

So confirmed Revicon's long-term commitment to support amateur boxing.

"We recognize the potential of our boxers to win honors for our country and we take pride in this partnership with ABAP," So said.

Laiza Filart, Revicon's product associate, specified Cebu, Davao, Naga and Baguio as the cities where they will be sponsoring Abap tournaments.

Dennis U. Eroa

Haas fires 61, grabs Hope Classic lead

CALIFORNIA—Jay Haas shot a 61, the second 11-under round of the day, to take a one-shot lead as scores went low Thursday on a sunny, windless day at the Bob Hope Classic.

Haas, who won the Hope in 1988, rolled in a 3-foot putt on No. 18 for his third birdie in a row and the best round of his 26 years on the tour. He went to 16-under 128 through 36 holes of the five-day tournament.

Second-year tour player Pat Perez also shot a 61, but that was merely good enough to put him in a tie for third place.

Harrison Frazar's second-round 62 left him one shot back of Haas, and first-round co-leader Stephen Ames had a 67 and was tied with Perez and Joe Durant at 14 under. Durant, the tournament champion two years ago, had a 63.

The 61s were only two shots off the PGA Tour record of 59, set by Al Geiberger in 1977, equaled by Chip Beck in 1991, and matched again by David Duval when he won the Hope in 1999.

Duval ballooned to a second-round 78 after an opening 65. *AP*

mo cookies
mo: a slang term for /more/
cookies: used in reference to stealing a basketball. example: he stole his cookies!

mo jimmys
mo: a slang term for /more/
jimmys: a jump shot. example. that kid's jimmy is smooth.

mo dimes
mo: a slang term for /more/
dimes: an american coin with a value of ten pennies that in the context of basketball means an assist. example: did you see that pass? he dropped a dime.

mo shakes
mo: a slang term for /more/
shakes: the result of several basketball moves and fakes by a dribbling offensive player which has caused a defender to try to go into more than one direction at the same time.

mo boom
mo: a slang term for /more/
boom: a powerful, loud, and emphatic dunk shot. example: i boomed on you, man!

mo cleaning glass
mo: a slang term for /more/
cleaning glass: to rebound a basketball. originated due to the fact most backboards are made of plexiglas, and many players use big swiping motions to gather rebounds.

MO GAME

mo game
mo: a slang term for /more/
game: what a multi-skilled player has when he wears the nike shox vc II. its full-length shox technology provides the responsive energy you need to shake, shoot jimmys, steal cookies, drop dimes, boom and clean glass.

nike.com/nikeshox

DHL-NGAP

Rosal runs away with amateur title

CANLUBANG—Abe Rosal fired a five-under par 67 yesterday and ruled the 8th DHL-NGAP Open amateur golf championship with a record 11-shot margin at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club North courser.

The 40-year-old weekend golfer put the country's top amateurs to shame, posting a nine-under-par 279 card over four days that was the lowest in the event since the now-pro Gerald Rosales won with a 277 in 1999.

Rosal's 11-shot edge over fellow Canlubang mainstays Juvic Pagunsan and Jay Bayron was a new record in this event presented by DHL Worldwide Express and WWW Express.

"Not bad for a Saturday golfer," said Rosal, a portly bank executive who entered the tournament primarily to hone up for Canlubang's title defense in the Philippine Airlines Interclub late this month and was supposed to quit after two days.

"Definitely, this is the best golf I've played in my life."

So flawless was Rosal under demanding conditions at the wind-swept North course that nobody got closer than four strokes of him from the time he grabbed the lead with another 67 in Wednesday's second round.

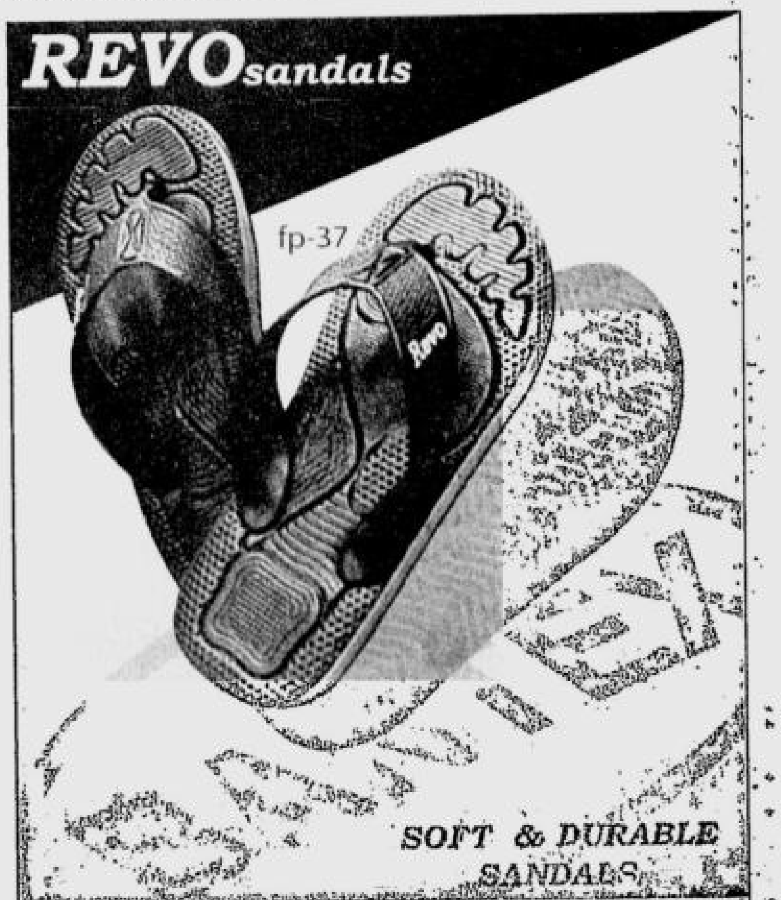
The final round was no different.

The only time he was really challenged was on the par-5 second hole where he was on the greenside trap in two and needing to answer after Bayron–who was in second place, four shots down–put his third shot of the pin but let his belly putter do the rest of the work for him, holing the putt to hold off the young Bayron.

"That was crucial," he said later. *"Kung nakunan n'ya ako ron, siguradong may pressure."*

A two-shot swing on the next hole–on Rosal's 12-foot birdie against Bayron's bogey–brought the lead to six and set up Rosal for the runaway win which he punctuated with birdies on the 9th, 14th, and 16th holes.

Pagunsan was the only other player who was able to keep up with the pace Rosal set in the final round. The reigning Southeast Asian Games champion fired a three-under 69 and beat Bayron for second place via countback.



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NBA THRILLER

Mavericks down Wolves

DALLAS—Dirk Nowitzki scored 32 points and fellow All-Star Steve Nash added 25 to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 112-109 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves in a thrilling game featuring 12 lead changes Thursday.

Nowitzki, who took a hard shot to the head from Kevin Garnett late in the third quarter, also grabbed 10 rebounds.

Garnett and Troy Hudson both had 31 points for the Wolves.

Garnett, coming off a season-best 34-point game, also pulled down 17 rebounds while dishing out eight assists.

"He (Garnett) creates all sorts of problems," Nash told reporters. "We did a good job holding him late." Joe Smith added 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Wolves, whose six-game winning streak came to an end.

Bucks 97, Wizards 90

In Milwaukee, the Bucks hit 10-of-21 from three-point territory to defeat the Washington Wizards 97-90.

Milwaukee's Sam Cassell made two of his three three-pointers and collected a game-high 31 points. Tim Thomas added 17 for the Bucks, the league's best three-point shooting team.

Michael Jordan, named as a reserve for his 14th All-Star Game, bounced back from one of his worst outings of the season on Wednesday to notch 24 points for Washington on 11-of-24 shooting.

The Bucks have won nine of their last 11 games to hold down the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. *Reuters*

NOWITZKI (right) of the Dallas Mavericks is fouled by Kevin Garnett (left) of the Minnesota Timberwolves as he drives to the basket during their NBA game yesterday. Mavericks won, 112-109. AFP

Magic returns for All-Star

NEW YORK—Retired National Basketball Association stars Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Dominique Wilkins will make a brief comeback to the court on February 8 at an event for the NBA All-Star Game.

Johnson, 43, quit the NBA in 1991 after revealing he had tested positive for the HIV virus which causes AIDS. The former Los Angeles Lakers star made a brief comeback in the 1995-96 season after a failed stint as the club's coach.

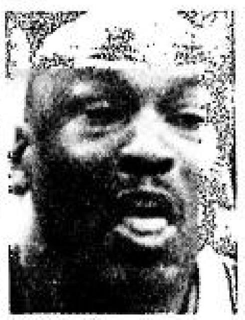
He will join Wilkins, the Atlanta Hawks' all-time scoring leader, in the NBA's Hoop-It-Up 3-on-3 contest between Los Angeles and Atlanta squads on February 8, the eve of the annual All-Star encounter.

Johnson led the Lakers to NBA crowns in 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987 and 1988 during the club's "Showtime" era of greatness.

"Magic" will join Corey Maggette of the Los Angeles Clippers, Women's NBA player Lisa Leslie and actor Ashton Kutcher against the Atlanta lineup of Wilkins, Hawks guard Jason Terry, WNBA Most Valuable Player Sheryl Swoopes and actor Frankie Muniz. *AFP*

Jordan turns down starting berth offers

MILWAUKEE—Michael Jordan is just glad to be going to another All-Star game and doesn't mind watching the tip-off from the bench, either.



JORDAN

Jordan turned down offers from Tracy McGrady and Allen Iverson to relinquish their starting spots in the All-Star game.

McGrady, the Orlando guard who led the Eastern Conference in fan balloting, made his offer Thursday. Iverson made a similar offer in a private phone call a week and a half ago, Jordan revealed Thursday night before Washington's game against Milwaukee.

"It's not like I've never had a start. I've had plenty of starts," Jordan said.

Jordan said McGrady and Iverson are "entitled to" their starting status, but he appreciated the offers nonetheless.

"It shows what type of people they are, about the history of the game, about guys who have paved the way," Jordan said. "I would have done it for Dr. J. and I'm sure Dr. J. would have done it for someone else.

"That, to me, just shows how much they care about the game. I take it as a compliment, but I would rather for them to play and start and let me come off the bench."

Jordan said Iverson called him after the starting lineups were announced earlier this month.

"He said, 'If you don't mind, I'd like to step aside and let you start,'" Jordan recounted. "No one knew about it. He called me personally and I didn't make it known."

Precedent has been set for McGrady's and Iverson's offer.

John Havlicek started in 1978 because current Wizards coach Doug Collins stepped aside.

"I've always kidded him to this day that it was very difficult for a Sixer to step aside for a Celtic," Collins said. *AP*

Stojakovic replaces Webber in roster

NEW YORK—Due to Chris Webber's ankle injury, Peja Stojakovic will be an All-Star for the second straight season.

NBA commissioner David Stern selected Stojakovic as Webber's replacement Thursday, allowing the Sacramento Kings to remain represented on the court at the league's showcase event.

Webber will miss at least three weeks with a sprained left ankle, the same injury that sidelined him for the first 20 games last season. He is averaging 23 points, 10.5 rebounds and 5.5 assists for the Pacific Division-leading Kings.

Stojakovic is the team's third-leading scorer, averaging 18.0 points.

Webber went up for a hoop shot over Utah's Scott Padgett and appeared to come down on Padgett's foot in the second quarter of a 102-92 loss to the Jazz on Tuesday night. Webber limped off the court with help from two teammates with 10:33 left in the period and did not return. *AP*

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - LA Lakers vs Sacramento, 11:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), ESPN

NBA Inside Stuff, 4 p.m. (r), Star Sports

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Superbowl XXXVII, 4 p.m. (r), ESPN

TENNIS: The Collins Cup, 6:30 p.m., Star Sports

GOLF: Heineken Classic Golf 2003, 10 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Star Sports

Asian PGA - Caltex Singapore Masters, 4:30 p.m., Star Sports

CYCLING: Tour of Langkawi, 2:30 p.m., Star Sports

POOL: Mosconi Cup 2002, 2 p.m. (r), ESPN

SOCCER: Goals!, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. (r), ESPN

Wang's tops Picaa Cup

WANG'S Ballclub is this year's Picaa YKL Cup champion.

Owned and managed by businessman-sportsman Alex Wang and handled by coach Jerome Cueto, Wang's beat Spring Cooking Oil, 81-71, to capture the title in this prestigious tournament organized by the Philippine Integrated Chinese Athletic Association (Picaa) and sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).

Six mainstays led by Jerwin Gaco and Rafhael Santos, scored in double figures for Wang's Ballclub, which battled back from a couple of 12-point deficits early in the third quarter to wrap up the win.

The 6-foot-3 Gaco, who was later voted as most valuable player of the tournament, scattered a game-high 20 points for Wang's Ballclub, while Santos added 13 and Chris de Jesus contributed 12.

Three other players–Billy Moody, Jomar Tierra and Randy Lopez–added 10 points apiece.

"We're very, very happy to win the first title in local basketball this year," said Wang, who received the championship trophy from Picaa officials Christian Tan, Tony Fabico and Tony Yap.

Rodel Manuel and Tyrone Bautista led the Tito Palma-coached Spring with 17 and 13 points, respectively.

Spring led by as many as 12 points thrice–51-39, 52-40 and 57-45–on hits by Manuel, Bautista and Mario Reyes.

Pava intends to lure 1,000 unlisted clubs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IN A bid to resuscitate the dying sport of volleyball, newly elected officials of the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association said it will forage into the countryside, holding free clinics for players, coaches and referees.

Hoping to lure the estimated 1,000 unregistered volleyball clubs all over the country, Pava will also offer free events management for their respective tournaments aside from providing technical know-how. There are only about 200 clubs affiliated with Pava nowadays.

Newly elected Pava secretary general Jake Uichico said the only way to regain volleyball's popularity in the country is to convince the existing clubs to register with the Pava and dangle enticing benefit for them.

"There is a great need to reach out to the provinces if we want to generate interest nationwide," said Uichico. "We noticed that Pava focused more on Metro Manila the past few years where there is more potential athletes in the provinces."

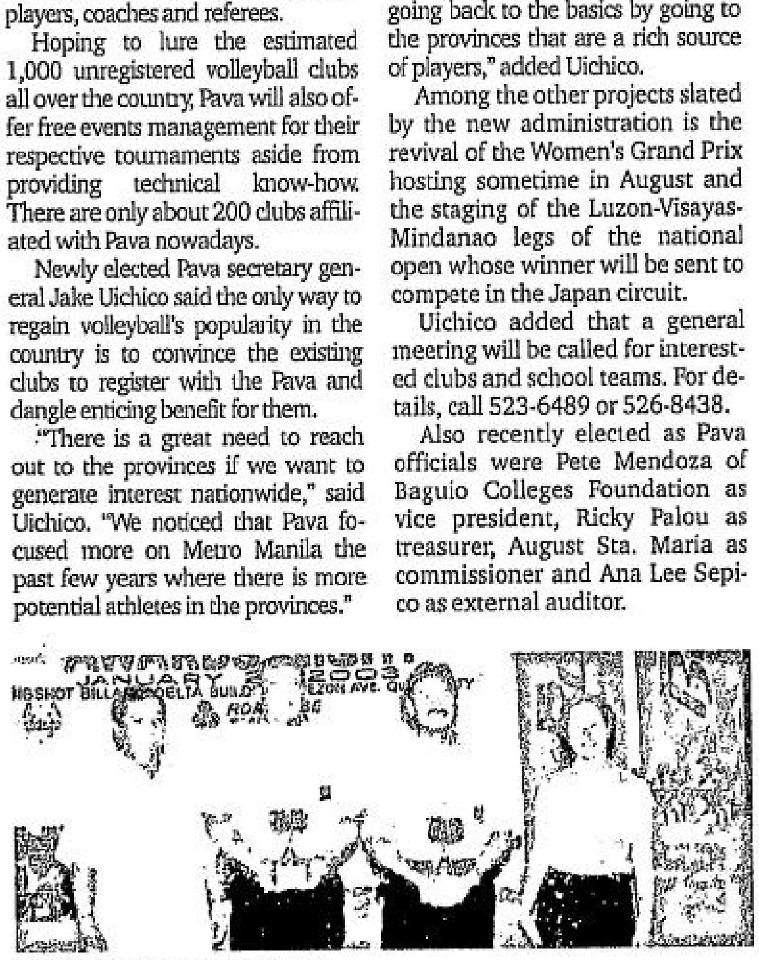
He said the election of Roger Banzuela as president is a big plus for that project because Banzuela is based in Bacolod just like Bro. Rolando Dizon, FSC, who retained his position as chair.

"Bro. Dizon thought of the idea of going back to the basics by going to the provinces that are a rich source of players," added Uichico.

Among the other projects slated by the new administration is the revival of the Women's Grand Prix hosting sometime in August and the staging of the Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao legs of the national open whose winner will be sent to compete in the Japan circuit.

Uichico added that a general meeting will be called for interested clubs and school teams. For details, call 523-6489 or 526-8438.

Also recently elected as Pava officials were Pete Mendoza of Baguio Colleges Foundation as vice president, Ricky Palou as treasurer, August Sta. Maria as commissioner and Ana Lee Sepico as external auditor.



PETRON CHAMPIONS

Vip Isada (second from left) and Robbie Hermoso receive their awards after winning the overall championship and NCR-19 title, respectively, during the recent 2002 Petron Rallye Series. With them are Petron's Cesar Galang and Cheche Tugbang.

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PBA realigns organizational structure

By June Navarro

EALA

THE PBA Commissioner's Office once had an organizational structure that solidly stood for more than two decades.

But the hierarchy within the league's top brass will now be a thing of the past as new PBA Commissioner Noli Eala re-aligned its foundations in an effort to maximize efficiency within his office.

The item of PBA executive director, known as the commissioner's alter ego and right-hand man, was chipped off the structure along with the league's executive secretary.

Filling their slots are the operations, finance and marketing divisions of the PBA whose department heads report directly to the commissioner.

During the term of former PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino, the marketing, finance and operations were under the executive director's jurisdiction.

Former PBA executive director Sonny Barrios has retired from active duty while his deputy, Rickie Santos, temporarily acts as operations manager pending the appointment of the three department heads.

Although the new structure already had the blessings of the team owners, Eala's suggested leaders in the finance, operations and marketing side of the league have yet to get the approval of the PBA Board of Governors.

Eala's financial guy is a certified public accountant who worked as chief comptroller in a multinational firm.

His marketing man is a toss-up between a franchising expert from Georgetown University and an events management expert known to have organized projects all over the globe.

The operations was actually meant for former PBA finance and technical chief Ricky Palou but he begged off, prompting Eala to get a lawyer from a sports-loving family connected with the defunct MBA.

Eala declined to name his chosen men so as not to preempt the decision of the board.

Apart from the three key positions, only minor changes will transpire within the office, Eala said.

"It's basically just a realigtment of positions," said the 39-year-old Eala.

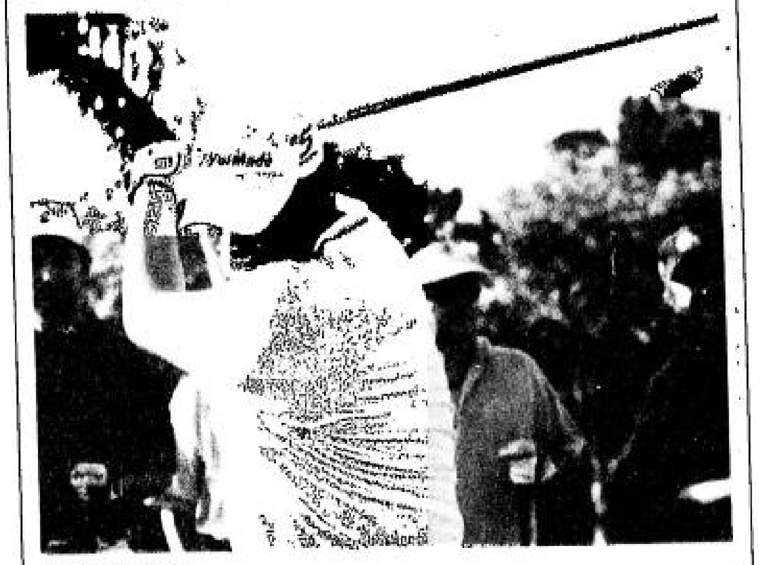
"There should be continuity in the programs so it's also necessary to keep the rank-and-file personnel intact."

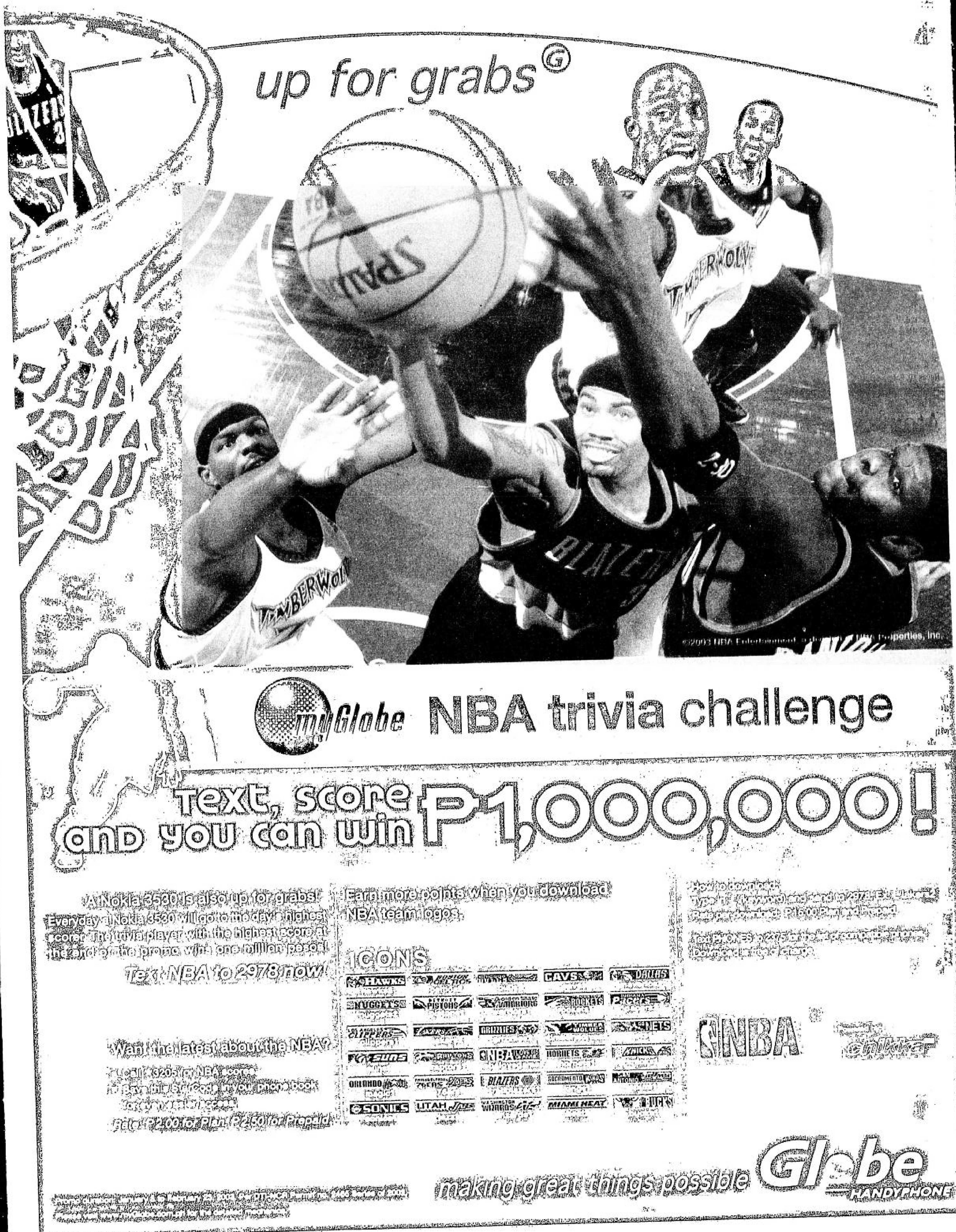
Among the 26 regular workers in the commissioner's office, only Palou and referee chief Romy Guevarra were not absorbed as both opted for retirement.

A total of 20 rank-and-file personnel were dispersed among the work groups within the commissioner's office. Eala said he would employ the services of nine more people including the three department heads.

Pre-season games

TALK N' Text dumped Alaska, 102-96, and Sta. Lucia Realty drubbed Purefoods, 101-78, in yesterday's pre-season games. San Miguel Beer and Ginebra clash at 4 p.m. today in Lipa City.


LSGH GOLF
PSC chair Eric Buhain hits the ceremonial drive during the La Salle Greenhills' 11th Drive for a Cause golf tournament at Southwoods yesterday.
ROMY HOMILLADA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LUZVIMIN TRIANGLE

PBL plans to go regional

By Dennis U. Eroa

AS PROOF of its newly found success, the PBL plans to go regional, a concept which went into the doldrums following the demise of the Metropolitan Basketball Association.

In an exclusive interview yesterday, PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad said the concept will not only boost the league's fans base but will assure young talents from all over the country the opportunity to play.

"Our concept is not only to provide entertainment, but to help in grassroots development," Trinidad said.

The PBL attracted standing room only crowd when it held out-of-town games in the recent Challenge Cup.

Games One and Two of the best-of-five title series won by champion Welcoat over Dazz were held in Lucena and San Pablo cities, respectively.

PBL Chair Dioceldo Sy said the regional concept is a welcome development for the league, which has evolved as a major playmaker in the country's colorful basketball scene.

"I see little problem for going regionals. This goes to show that the PBL is a success," said Sy.

Trinidad's proposal is simple. He calls his concept "triangle" which represents Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

TRINIDAD

"The PBL will also have a national champion because nobody has the monopoly to award a national champion," Trinidad said.

Trinidad said he expects nine teams, three each for Luzvimin to see action in the coming conference tentatively scheduled on March 15.

Two giants companies–San Miguel Corporation and RFM–are expected to embrace the regional concept wholeheartedly.

SMC, a league pioneer, will come back this year carrying the brand Viva Mineral Water, while RFM through Sunkist had already rejoined the league for the first time since 1989.

Viva will field in a team composed mostly of players from the FEU, while Sunkist will continue to tap UE manpower.

BluStar Detergent, formerly Blu, will lead the Luzon group. Sy, Blu owner, said he is negotiating with close friend Gov. Joel Reyes to use Palawan in his team. Sport development is one of the priorities of Gov. Reyes.

Another team which is knocking at the PBL door is Nutrilicious, which is expected to represent Visayas.

Jaworski backs 6-footers league

SEN. Robert Jaworski yesterday threw his support to the Six Foot Junior Basketball Cup, which begins on Feb. 10.

At 6-foot-1 point, Jaworski is the prototype of the point-guard basketball patron Bert Lina had in mind when he conceptualized the six-footers league for players who are aged 18 and under.

Jaworski said the league "is a step in the right direction" towards the Philippines' quest for supremacy in the Asian region.

"The best time to start developing tall, young players to the ways of the point guard is now. In doing so, we are molding them into versatile warriors, whom we can count upon when we face the region's powerhouse teams such as China and Korea," said Jaworski.

"It will take time, but the important thing is the future looks bright for the sport," said the playing-coach-turned-senator, who added that he is backing the tournament "all the way, in whatever means and capacity."

Lina, the Basketball Association of the Philippines VP for Luzon and godfather of the RP Youth team, thanked the Senator for this support.

"It has always been my belief that of the five positions in basketball, the pointguard is the most important because they are the ones who emerge as leaders," said Lina.

Spring dumps Kwarta Padala

OZAMIZ CITY—Seething with vengeance, reigning Interclub basketball champion Spring Cooking Oil blasted newly crowned CBL-Sinulog titlist ML Kwarta Padala, 86-66, Thursday in the Mayor's Cup tournament here.

Led by Rodel Manuel, Mike Buendia and Ricky Ricafuerte, Coach Tito Palma's Cooking Oil Masters streaked to 45-30 halftime lead and never looked back.

"The boys gave their all because they had really looked forward to settling the score with the Cebuanos," said Spring team owner Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, obviously referring to his team's recent loss to Kwarta Padala in the Sinulog cagefest.

M.Lhuillier Jewellers, Spring's opening day victims, bounced back with a 98-95 conquest of Shineway Ozamiz in the other game.

The two teams fought evenly for three quarters before veteran Donking Sasuman sparkled in the fourth canto to provide the difference.

SPRING 86—Manuel 17, Buendia 13, Ricafuerte 10, Ybañez 9, T. Bautista 8, Reyes 7, Habelito 6, Espiritu 5, Saygo 5, Garcia 4, Limbo 2.

KWARTA 66—Aying 14, Lumantas 12, Ferraren 10, Reyes 10, Enterina 6, Taguines 4, Ticzon 4, Manego 2

Quarterscores: 21-17, 45-30, 63-51, 86-66.

Ateneo clinches overall diadem

HOST Ateneo de Manila University ran away with the overall championship but a tall, young player from Xavier School–Paul Tan Chua–emerged as one of the surprises in the basketball competition of the sixth JAM (Jesuits Athletic Meet) sportsfest which ended recently at the Ateneo high school court.

The Eaglets scored 11 points on the strength of their victories in chess and basketball (grade school and high school) to top Xavier School (6 points) and Ateneo de Davao University (5) in the overall race.

But the 17-year-old, 6-foot-2 Chua, son of Red Bull basketball team owner George who is eyeing a stint with La Salle in the UAAP, raised eyebrows by breaking into the high school competition's Mythical Team.

Chua, a strong rebounder and inside scorer, joined Ateneo de Manila's Jose Antonio Reyes and MVP Martin Enrique Quimson and Ateneo de Davao's Christopher Robles and Miguel Solitaria in the elite group.

Making up the grade school Mythical Five are Ateneo de Davao's Vincent Teofilo Marasigan and MVP Felix Carmelo Pepito, Ateneo de Manila's John David Dumrique and Ivan Angelo Enriquez and Xavier University's James Dahilan.

Xavier school ruled the 7-a-side football tilt while Sacred Heart School topped the table tennis event of the sportsfest founded and supervised by Fr. Raymond Holscher, S.J.

The individual awardees in table tennis are John Jay Yuvallos, SHS, singles; and Jose Franco Soberano/Rayner Emilio Tavera, SHS, doubles.

PSC gets sport gear tax share

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission can finally collect shares of the taxes paid for every sporting equipment imported to the country.

This is after the PSC, Department of Finance and other government agencies agreed on the procedure that will remit three percent of the taxes to the sports agency since 1990.

The agreement fulfills Section 26 of the Republic Act. 6847 which channels funds generated by concerned government agencies for the sports development program.

"The remittance of taxes on sports equipment is the last piece in the full and proper implementation of the PSC law," said PSC commissioner Mike Barredo.

PSC chair Eric Buhain, Finance Sec. Jose Isidro Camacho and Department of Budget and Management Sec. Emilia Boncodin are expected to sign the joint circular anytime next week.

Marc Anthony Reyes

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Editor Louie C. Camino

A new flame for Kris

MIKE ALQUINTO

AQUINO

ADDUCUL

By Leah Salterio

KRIS Aquino has a new guy in her life.

The daughter of former President Cory Aquino broke off from Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez on Monday and immediately started a "special friendship" on Thursday.

While her previous controversial romances had been with married men, Aquino is now dating a single guy, PBA cager Romel Adducul.

Kris admitted yesterday she was initially hesitant to go out with the pro-league cager because of their age difference.

She had insisted she was not ready to plunge into another serious relationship, anyway.

Adducul, who will suit up for Ginebra in the PBA is only 27. Aquino is turning 32 on Feb. 14.

"But he was really persistent just to befriend me," Aquino said of Adducul. "He's single, kind and really prayerful because he's a Born-Again Christian. He's just a new friend. We're in that stage where we're not ready yet for any serious commitment."

Aquino and Adducul went out on a date Thursday night at Greenbelt 3 Cinema, where they watched the last screening of Steven Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can," starring Tom Hanks and Leonardo Di Caprio.

Before entering the theater, however, Adducul, the former boyfriend of sexy actress Assunta de Rossi, bumped into his erstwhile girlfriend in the lobby.

De Rossi was coming out of the ladies room and had just watched the invitational screening of "Oro, Plata, Mata."

"That was a classic encounter," Aquino told the INQUIRER yesterday. "But I told Romel to say hello to Assunta and he did."

De Rossi tied the knot with Negros Occidental Rep. Jules Ledesma late last year.

Prior to Aquino's involvement with Marquez, she became the live-in partner of action star Phillip Salvador, with whom she has a love child, Joshua, now seven years old.

Aquino confided that her romance with Marquez is now over. She ended it last Jan. 27, exactly four years after her relationship with Salvador also ended.

Kris on Joey: "Can't give him what he wants"

"I GUESS I'm not the one for him (Joey Marquez)," Kris Aquino said. "I cannot give what he wants. He wants someone who is domesticated and subservient and that's not me.

"I also realized you just can't have it all. You can't have a career and a passionate love life at the same time because you don't have the time."

Aquino said she wanted someone who is really kind-hearted, this time.

"With Romel, we talk mostly about God, but I don't mind," she said. "He's really mabait."

Aquino revealed it was Boy Abunda, her cohost in ABS-CBN's showbiz-oriented talk show, "The Buzz," who introduced her to Adducul.

Middle of last year, Abunda interviewed Adducul and learned through the cager's manager, Ed Fonceja, that the cager has a big crush on Aquino. Abunda lost no time in letting Aquino know about it.

They swapped cell phone numbers.

"But at that time, I was still involved," Aquino said. "Then I changed my number but I didn't give it to him, so we lost contact."

Recently, the towering Adducul was also supposed to guest in the episode of "Morning Girls," the daily morning show which Aquino hosts.

"We were featuring guys who have good bodies, but after practicing for a game, he had back spasms so he called through the talent coordinator to apologize because he couldn't make it," Aquino shared.

"He told me he no longer has my new number, so I gave it to him. Then he said, 'Whenever you're free and you want to get together.' But I haven't been free. It took us three weeks to plan our first movie date."

Adducul was a two-time MVP of the Philippine Basketball League (PBL) before joining the pro-league.

Aquino had been linked with another pro-league cager, Alvin Patrimonio, during her teenage years.

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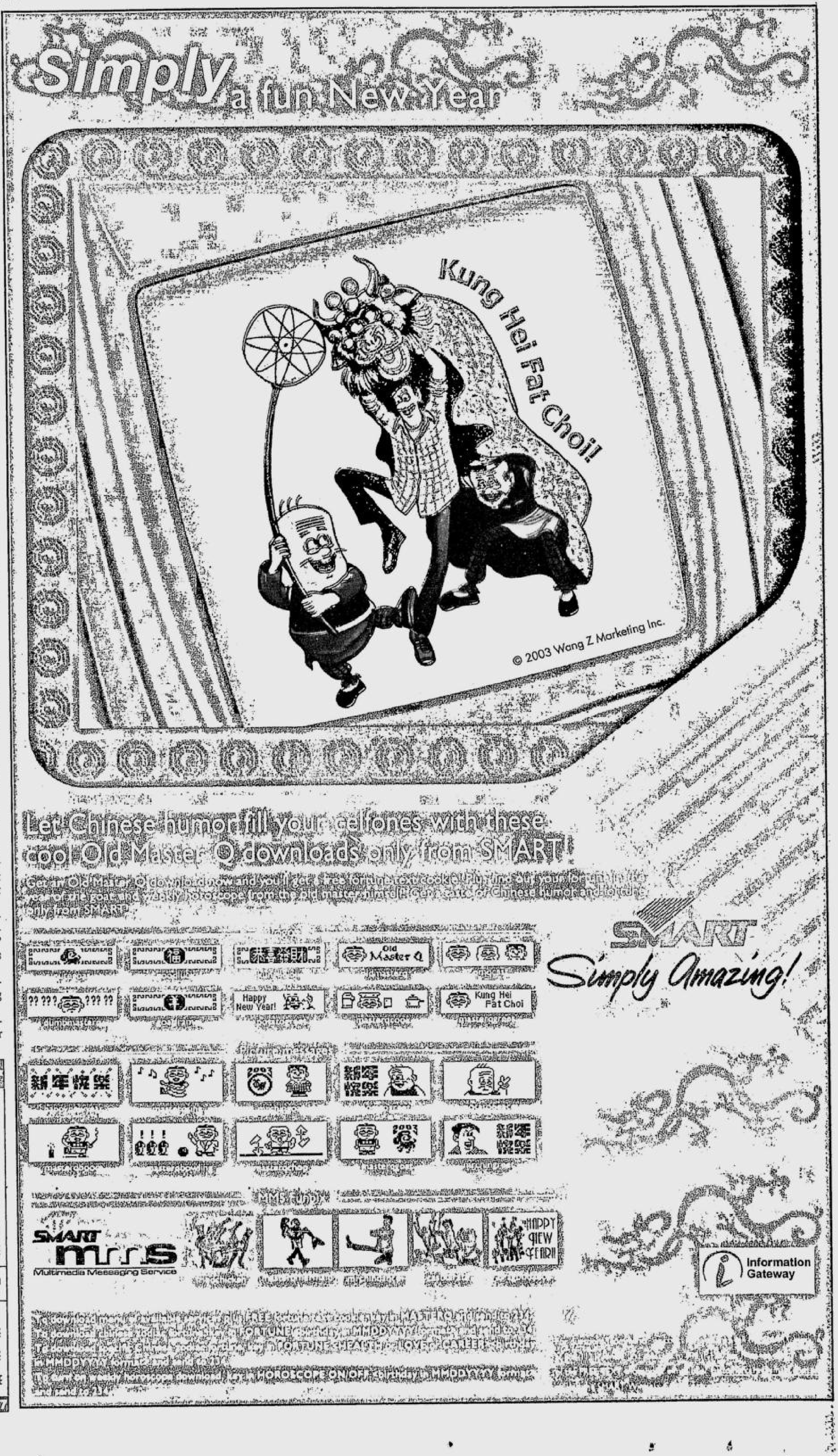
Simply a fun New Year
Kung Hei Fat Choi!
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Happy New Year!
Kung Hei Fat Choi
新年快樂
2003
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

For sreening times, call 729-7777.
Schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

AYALA CINEMAS NOW SHOWING

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 SUKDULAN	1 THE HOT CHICK 2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	1 OFF KEY (EXCLUSIVE) 12.25, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45	1 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 12:15, 3.05, 5:55, 8:45, 11:35	1 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2 RING (ORIG. JAPANESE VERSION)	3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 11:00	2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 10.45, 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 10:05	2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 11:45, 2:35, 5:25, 8:15, 11:05	2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN	4 FEMME FATALE 5 8 MILE	Onstage OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 7, 8, 13, 14 & 15	3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 11:15, 2:15, 5:15, 8:15, 11:05 4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 1:10, 4:40, 8.10, 11:30	3 THE HOT CHICK 4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
4 THE HOT CHICK	6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 7 BELOW		5 THE HOT CHICK 1:00, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50, 11:00	5 BELOW

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS G4 (or any Ayala Cinemas) and send to 2333
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1 (DOLBY)	BELOW
2 (SDDS)	FEMME FATALE
3 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 GOLD (DTS-ES)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	LORD OF THE RING
6 GOLD (SDDS)	THE RING
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	HOT CHICK
8	SUKDULAN
9	EIGHT MILE
10	TRY SEVENTEEN

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	ANALYZE THAT
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	ONE HOUR PHOTO

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	SUKDULAN
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	FEMME FATALE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	FEMME FATALE
2	BELOW
3	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	SUKDULAN

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
3	SUKDULAN
4	FEMME FATALE
5	BELOW
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

M star
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(Las Pinas)
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1	BELOW
2	FEMME FATALE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to 13
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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1	HALF PAST DEAD
2	HOME ALONG DA RIBER

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2	MALDITA
3	RESERVE

Sunshine
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1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	SUKDULAN
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE

GOTESCO CINEMAS

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	THE RING
5	TRY SEVENTEEN
6	SUKDULAN
7 (DTS)	BELOW
8 (SDDS)	HOT CHICK
9 (DOLBY)	FEMME FATALE

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	FEMME FATALE
2	SUKDULAN
3	SUKDULAN
4 (SDDS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	HALF PAST DEAD
6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
7 (DTS)	BELOW
8	THE RING
9	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2 (SDDS)	BELOW
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	THE RING

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS)	FEMME FATALE
4	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
5 (SDDS)	BELOW

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	SUKDULAN

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SUKDULAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

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Jennet
BED TIME STORY

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	BELOW
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	8 MILE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	FEMME FATALE
3	RESERVE
4	SUKDULAN
5	BELOW

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	SHAOLIN SOCCER
2	SUKDULAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta

MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400

1	SUKDULAN
2	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CATCH ME IF U CAN
4 (SDDS)	FEMME FATALE
5 (DTS)	HOT CHICK
6	TRY SEVENTEEN
7	BELOW

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400

1	8 MILE
2	THE RING

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	THE RING
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	THE RING
2 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
3 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	BELOW

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	THE SUKDULAN
2 (DOLBY)	BELOW
3 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	THE RING

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE RING
2	TRY SEVENTEEN
3 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2	TRAPPED
3 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
4	ANALYZE THAT

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
2 (DTS)	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
3	ONE HOUR PHOTO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	LARGADO
2	HAYOP SA GANDA
3 (DTS)	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
4	RESERVE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	REPLIKATE
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
5	EIGHT MILE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2	BELOW
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	BELOW
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	LIKE MIKE
2	THE RING
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4	HALF FAST DEAD

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2	SUKDULAN
3	HALF FAST DEAD

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0798

1	BANGKERO
2	REPLICATE
3	SWIM FAN
4	EIGHT MILE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121

1 (DOLBY EX)	EIGHT MILE
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS-ES)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	SWIM FAN

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 322-3571

1	VAMPS
2	EIGHT MILE
3 (DOLBY)	ANALZE THAT
4 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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Filinvest - Alabang
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SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	8 MILE
2	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
3	BELOW
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6	SUKDULAN
7	FEMME FATALE
8	HOT CHICK

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	SUKDULAN
2	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
3	BELOW
4	FEMME FATALE
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	HALF PAST DEAD
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	TRY SEVENTEEN
9	8 MILE
10	HOT CHICK

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	SUKDULAN
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	8 MILE
6	FEMME FATALE
7	BELOW
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
9	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
10	DIE ANOTHER DAY
11	HOT CHICK
12	SUKDULAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	HOT CHICK
2	RING (JAPANESE)
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	BELOW
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
9	SUKDULAN
10	SUKDULAN
11	FEMME FATALE
12	8 MILE

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	RING (JAPANESE)
6	8 MILE
7	TRY SEVENTEEN
8	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
9	SUKDULAN
10	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11	HOT CHICK
12	ONE HOUR PHOTO

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	FEMME FATALE
2	8 MILE
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	RING (JAPANESE)
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	BELOW
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	TRY SEVENTEEN
3	BELOW
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	LONG TIME DEAD
6	FEMME FATALE
7	SUKDULAN
8	8 MILE
9	HOT CHICK
10	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	SWIMFAN
5	8 MILE
6	SUKDULAN
7	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	CHARLOTTE GRAY
2	CLOSED
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4	HALF PAST DEAD
5	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
6	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7	CLOSED
8	SUKDULAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	ANALYZE THAT
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	BELOW
6	SUKDULAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	SUKDULAN
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	FEMME FATALE
4	SUKDULAN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	HALF PAST DEAD
2	SUKDULAN
3	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
4	HOT CHICK
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	BELOW

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	BELOW
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	SUKDULAN
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1	BELOW 10:10 FS/10:35 MF/12:50/3:05/5:20/7:35/9:20 LFS/9:50 LMF/11:35 END
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 10:40 FS/11:10 MF/1:55/4:40/7:25/9:45 LFS/10:10 LMF/12:30 END

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Galleria 632-9115-16 633-7641 loc. 279

THX	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 10:30 AM (MF); 1:15 PM 4:00 PM; 6:45 & 9:30 LMF
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	BELOW
4	FEMME FETALE
5	SUKDULAN
6	LORD OF THE RINGS II
7	8 MILE
8	THE RING (US VERSION)
9	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
10	HOT CHICK

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema / P75 level cinemas
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Ermita 536-7809-12

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	FEMME FETALE
3	BELOW
4	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
5	8 MILE
6	HOT CHICK
7	SUKDULAN

Metro East - Marcos hway 682-8193 / 8280

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	LORD OF THE RINGS II
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	BELOW
5	HOT CHICK
6	FEMME FETALE
7	8 MILE
8	SUKDULAN

Novaliches 935-3229-30

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	FEMME FETALE
6	8 MILE
7	BELOW
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Malabon Citisquare 288-0985 / 288-2575

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	SUKDULAN
4	FEMME FATALE

Star Mills- Sn Fernando, Pamp. 875-1927 961-5318 / 5270

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	SUKDULAN
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	BELOW
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	HOT CHICK

Imus 471-8188 / 875-3838

1	FEMME FETALE
2	8 MILE
3	BELOW
4	THE RING (US VERSION)
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	SUKDULAN

Sta. Rosa Laguna 049-8370907

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	SUKDULAN
4	THE RING (US VERSION)
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO

Bacolod 441-0453 / 0459

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	BELOW
3	LORD OF THE RINGS II
4	HALF PAST DEAD
5	THE RING (US VERSION)
6	8 MILE

Iloilo 336-8077-78

1	LORD OF THE RING II
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	SUKDULAN
4	LORD OF THE RING II
5	CHARLOTTE GRAY
6	THE RING (US VERSION)

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Cold spell kills 3 persons in QC

By Alcuin Papa

THREE men died in their sleep early yesterday morning in Quezon City as the temperature dropped in the area due to the prevailing cold spell.

Central Police District investigators believe that the three victims yesterday succumbed to the extreme cold. The lowest point recorded yesterday was 19 degrees centigrade, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

The coldest day in Quezon City was on Jan. 27, when the mercury hit 16.9 degrees centigrade, Pagasa said.

The lowest temperature in the country was recorded in Baguio City on Jan. 19. The temperature was 8 degrees centigrade.

The first victim was identified as Joel San, 40, a resident of Barangay Payatas A, Quezon City. A coworker, Ruel Badigos, found the victim's body at around 6:30 a.m. inside the Marquez Car Wash.

The second fatality was identified as Bienvenido Estino, 64, of Barangay Sta. Lucia, Fairview.

Estino's employee, Christina Tebueno, found the victim's body—already in rigor mortis—inside the master bedroom at around 10:15 a.m., investigators said.

Fifteen minutes later, Barangay Captain Rolando Datiles found the body of Ruben Ringor, 52, of Barangay Bagong Bahay, Project 4, inside the victim's bathroom.

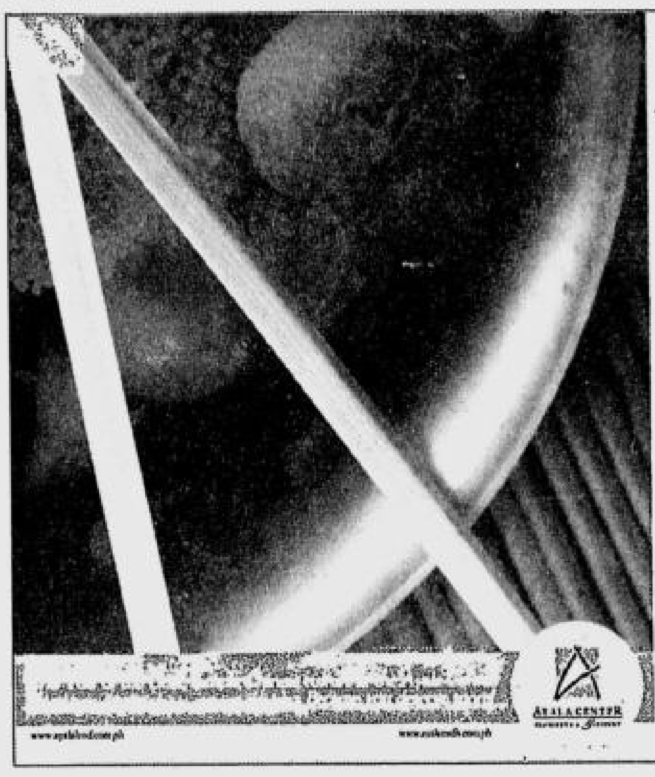
Police are now waiting for the results of autopsy conducted on the three men.

Preacher in sexual assault case flees

DOMINGO Redado, a preacher of the Christian sect Jehovahs' Witnesses, is on the run after he was accused of raping a 16-year-old high school student in Rizal.

Police said the victim, a resident of Taytay, Rizal, was accompanied by her teacher when she filed the complaint on Jan. 23. The victim said that the suspect has been raping her since last year.

Police said Redado has been charged before the Rizal Provincial Prosecutors Office. *N. Flores*


GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER
• Food Booths
by participating hotels:
Dusit Hotel Nikko
Hotel Intercontinental Manila
Makati Shangri-La Manila
Mandarin Oriental Manila
New World Renaissance Hotel
The Peninsula Manila
from Feb. 3 - 7
• Chinese opera photo exhibit by the Embassy
of The People's Republic of China
- Feb. 3-7
• Feng Shui talk by Mr. Joseph Chau
- Feb. 3, 1 pm
• Chinese dance performances by:
Shin Yi Dance Troupe - Feb. 5 7 pm
Philippine Cultural Dance Troupe
- Feb. 7, 7 pm
• Chinese painting exhibit by the
Chan Lim family - Feb. 3-7
Glorietta 1
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The world's local bank

Muslims join cops in hunting down Llamas slay suspect

By Christian Esguerra and Philip Tubeza

MEMBERS of Muslim communities in Mindanao have joined the hunt for the suspected killer of Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

Religious and political leaders, particularly those in Marawi City, have promised to help Manila-based investigators locate Bashir Abdulrahman, who was identified as the man who shot and killed Llamas in Pasay City last Jan. 10, said Vic Verdadero, lawyer of the Llamas family.

"A Muslim who takes the life of another person, whether a Muslim or a Christian, can never escape the rule of law," the lawyer yesterday quoted Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen as saying.

Verdadero said the family had sought Dilangalen's help because, like Llamas, the lawmaker is also an alumnus of the Ateneo Law School and a member of the Aquila Legis Fraternity.

To speed up Abdulrahman's arrest, the lawyer said the family and the fraternity would release next week a bounty of at least P250,000.

Yesterday, the National Bureau of Investigation also announced that the authorities will be filing murder charges against Bashir Abdulrahman next week.

Edmund Arugay, NBI director for the National Capital Region, said the bureau, the police and lawyers of the Llamas family will jointly file the case against the fugitive Bashir.

Arugay said that the investigators decided to file the case after one of the shells found at the crime scene matched the specimen of Abdulrahman's Taurus 9-mm pistol kept in Camp Crame.

Arugay said that a murder case would be filed since there was "treachery" involved in the killing.

"Our investigation has confirmed that (Llamas) was writing something on a piece of paper when the suspect shot him," Arugay said. "(Llamas) had no chance to defend himself."

He said Llamas was first hit in the nape, which meant that Abdulrahman shot him while his back was turned.

undred percent

RIGHT WHERE IT HURTS
A slap in the face is what this suspected robber received in the hands of a woman—one of the supposed victims of an FX robbery gang. The suspects, Angelito Bernardo, Joel Perez, Bernie Molina, Allan Solomon, and Jefferson Gabat, are now detained at the Central Police District Station 10.
JOAN BONDOC

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Philippine Airlines

Criminals are very happy

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

BECAUSE of that rotten, stinking, good-for-nothing Moro who shot to death a topnotch law graduate during a traffic altercation recently, other citizens who need to carry guns for protection are already helpless.

How can law-abiding citizens, whose lives are under threat, now defend themselves against would-be assailants?

How can law-abiding citizens protect themselves against criminals and criminal-minded law enforcers?

You say that they should depend on the police for protection? C'mon, give me a break!

* * *

But these questions are already moot and academic because President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the indefinite suspension of the issuance of permits to carry guns.

Law-abiding citizens whose lives are threatened will just have to use their wits and cunning to stay out of harm's way.

So, when you sense danger, run like hell! And when you're cornered, fight with your teeth and nails.

* * *

Criminals are happy because they bring their guns or other deadly weapons with or without the presidential ban.

With citizens deprived of the means to protect themselves, they are easy prey to criminals. And the criminals include many of those who wear the uniform.

Look what happened to PR man Bubby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito. Weren't they kidnapped and murdered by elite policemen?

* * *

When you outlaw guns, only outlaws will have guns.

And the irony of ironies is that some of the people who are sworn to protect and serve the citizenry—the policemen—are the ones abusing the people.

The ban on the carrying of firearms in public places should also include off-duty policemen or cops wearing civilian clothes. Only those wearing their uniform should be allowed to carry their service firearms. The exception should be cops on intelligence work.

* * *

During the 12th founding day of the Philippine National Police (PNP) last Thursday, the President announced the remaining months of her administration would be spent in ridding the PNP of "rascals in uniform."

"Rascals in uniform" were her exact words to describe abusive policemen.

Let's all hope she keeps her word because the people are losing trust in the units or agencies within or out of the PNP where aggrieved citizens seek redress from abusive cops.

* * *

Complaints against policemen take a long time to be resolved by such units or agencies. These agencies or units cite "due process" as the reason for the much delayed resolution of cases.

The saying that "justice delayed is justice denied" aptly applies to administrative and criminal cases filed against policemen.

Because a complaining citizen waits too long for a case to be resolved or is given the runaround, he loses interest in pursuing the case.

* * *

If Ms Macapagal wants to leave a legacy that will long be remembered, it should be a massive purge of the PNP of its abusive and inept members.

For starters, she would do well to revamp the (PNP) Internal Affairs Service or IAS. This agency handles complaints against cops. But it is useless.

The President might also take a look at another agency that was formed to try administrative cases, jury-style, against policemen, the People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB). This is another paper tiger.

As the PNP commander-in-chief, Ms Macapagal might do well to order an accounting of all administrative cases against cops. She'll be surprised how many there are.

* * *

In announcing that henceforth, the medium of instruction in all schools in the country will be in English, the President showed courage.

She knew that she would be under attack from Tagalog purists and the so-called nationalists. She knew that it would create controversy.

But it is high time that English was returned as the medium of instruction.

* * *

While other countries like China, for example, are frantically teaching their young to learn English, the international language, this country is teaching its youth to unlearn English.

The pseudo-nationalists among us say that teaching Filipino, Tagalog or whatever is called the "national language" will inculcate nationalism among us.

What's language got to do with love of country? National hero Rizal wrote his valedictory poem not in Tagalog but in Spanish. President Manuel L. Quezon, the father of "national language" delivered his famous speeches in English or Spanish.

* * *

There's really a need to revert to English as our medium of instruction. The following statement, supposedly made by a present-day student, shows why:

"Totoo ba na ang maganda at guwapo ay mahina sa isfeling end grammers? My gash! Did they sure? Wat does they proof? It hurts too me! I am not belief to this. Does you?"

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OPENS JANUARY 29

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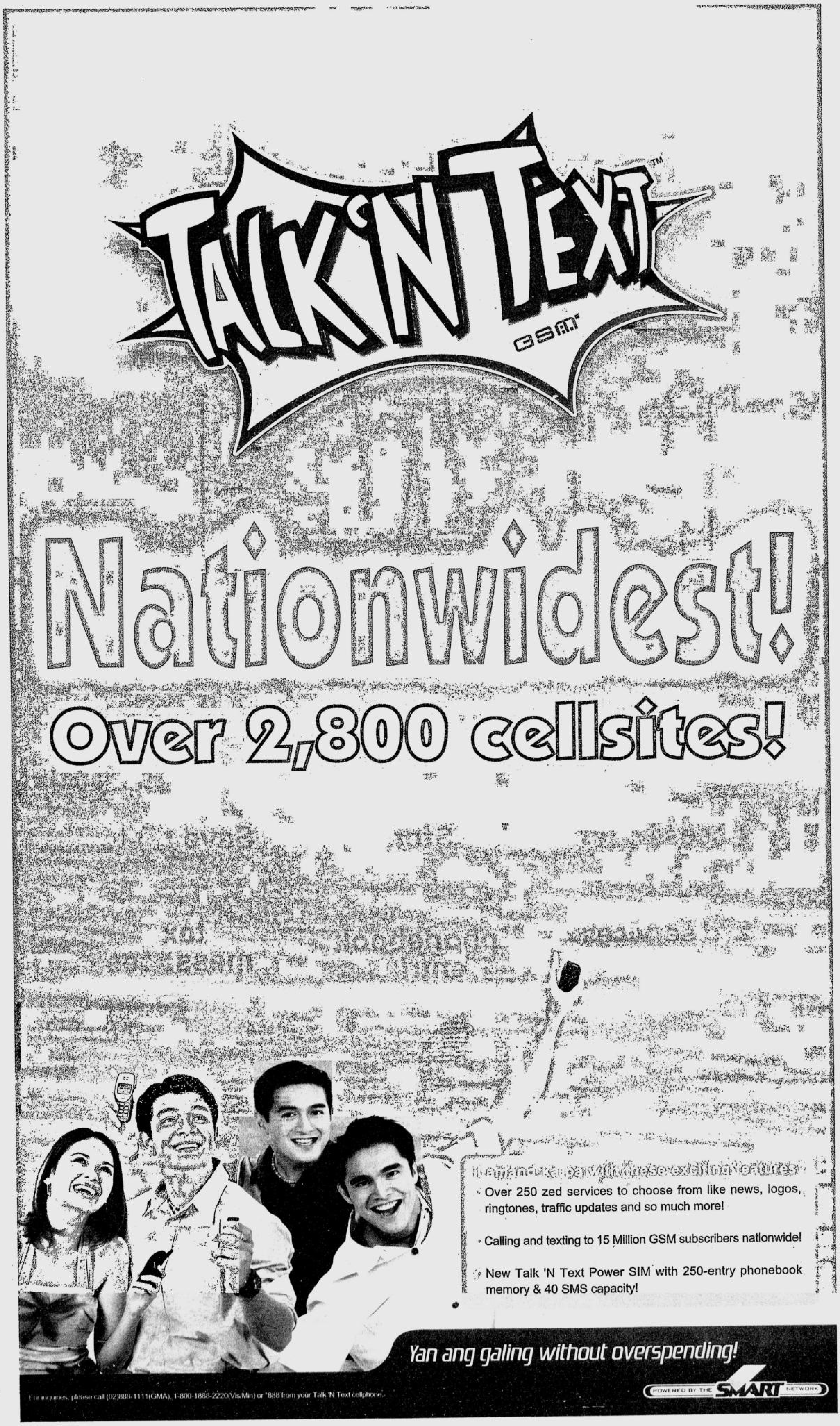

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MMDA men beat up newsboy, guard in Pasay road-clearing

By Christian Esguerra

THE CONTROVERSIAL sidewalk clearing operations yesterday taught a newspaper boy and a fastfood security guard a cruel lesson—never cross the path of Bayani Fernando's wrecking crew.

At least seven members of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's demolition team beat up newspaper vendor Ericson Dimalanta, 18, and Chowking security guard Roger Suelo, 26, during a violent clearing operation near the corner of Edsa and Taft Avenue in Pasay yesterday.

Worse, the MMDA men even allegedly took P800 from the newsboy and Suelo's wristwatch, the victims told police.

Dimalanta had a swollen left eye on top of nasty club marks all over his head and body. The security guard suffered more severe injuries and was confined at the San Juan De Dios Hospital.

The suspects were identified as Felix Esquivel, Angelito Matnog, Ernesto David, Ronald Tresvalles, Emerson Gonzales, Romer Tablate, and Joel Fortin.

The MMDA men beat up Dimalanta after they mistook him as the man who had supposedly hurled a block of ice at the MMDA bus at around 9:30 a.m., pedicab driver Esteban Acompanado told the INQUIRER.

The MMDA was supposed to drive away vendors in front of Giselle Building at the Pasay intersection.

The victim said the suspects immediately attacked him with wooden clubs, but he later managed to run to a nearby Chowking restaurant where Suelo was detailed.

The furious MMDA men vented their ire on Suelo when he tried to keep them from entering the restaurant, Dimalanta said.

"He told them, 'Let's just talk about this,' but they still swarmed all over him," he added.

The suspects claimed it was Dimalanta who had instigated the fight. They said they mauled the security guard because he supposedly poked his gun at them.

Police are set to file charges of robbery and physical injuries against the MMDA men.

Sweet-toothed robbers hit chocolate van in QC

By Alcuin Papa

THREE sweet-toothed robbers couldn't keep their cravings to themselves.

Police said the unidentified men broke into the delivery van of the Twin Oakes Food Corp., parked on 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City, and stole 150 blocks of chocolate worth P30,000 at around 4 a.m. Thursday.

Darwin Landicho, 29, a manager for the Twin Oakes Food Corp., went to the Central Police District Office to report the theft.

Landicho said that the chocolate blocks were supposed to be delivered to shops specializing in cakes and pastry products.

Jehovah's Witnesses meet in QC

MORE than 3,000 delegates from all over Metro Manila are expected to attend a special assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses tomorrow at their assembly hall on Quirino Avenue, Barangay Kaligayahan, Novaliches, Quezon City.

The theme of the gathering is "To be Rich in Fine Works," a subject various speakers will discuss in light of the current difficult times.

David Ledbetter, representative of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's Philippine branch, will give the keynote address in the afternoon. The public is invited to listen.

A series of one-day special assemblies is scheduled to be held in other cities nationwide, in conjunction with the Watchtower's worldwide educational program carried out in 234 countries by 6.3 million ordained ministers.

Veteran dog catcher dies from dog bite

FOR 40 years, Manuel Pascual of Bulacan, Bulacan, earned a living by catching dogs and trading them.

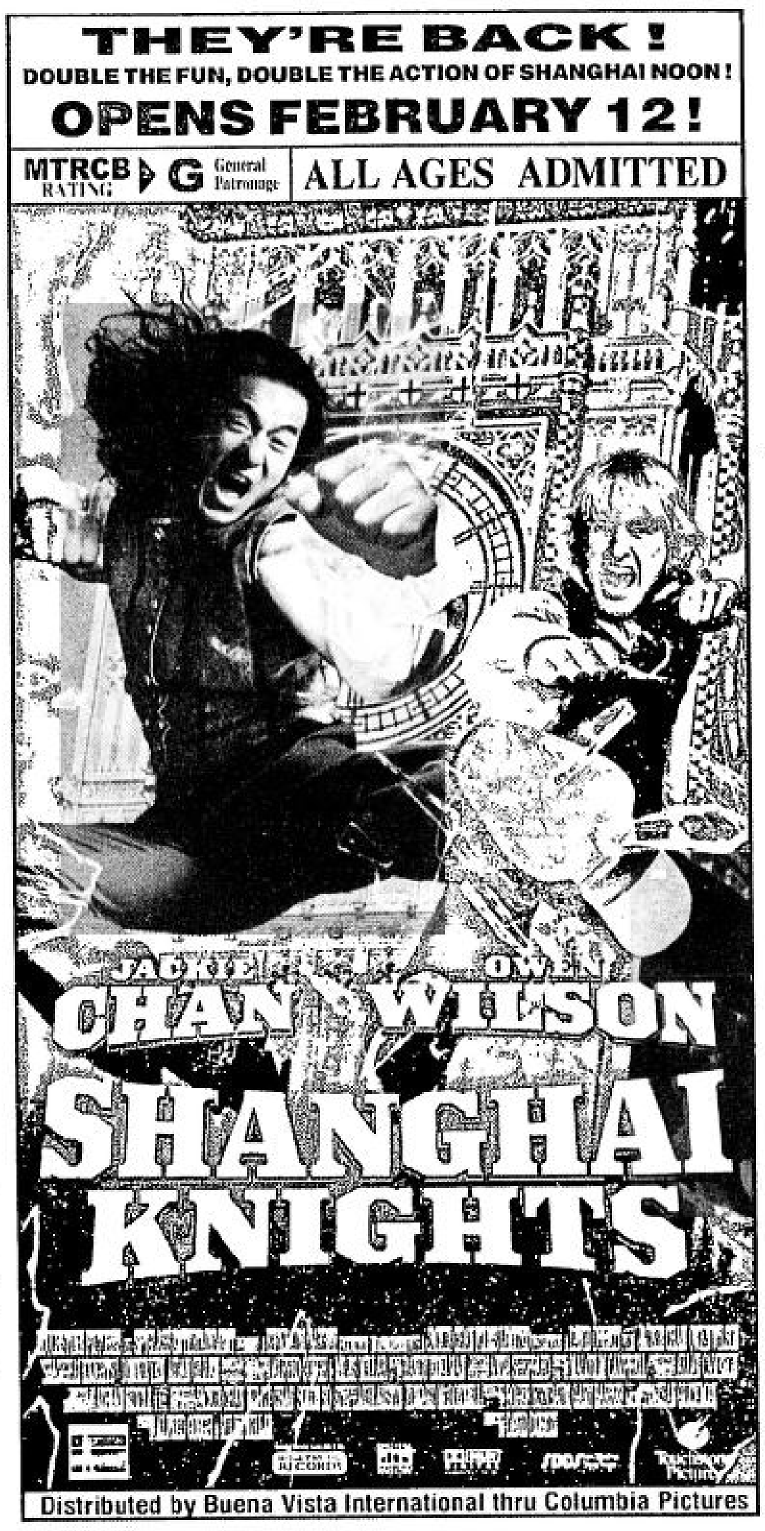
On Monday, Pascual died after his rabid puppy bit him on Sunday.

Pascual, popularly known in his Barangay Maysantol neighborhood as "Popoy Aso," died at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila, a day after his month-old puppy bit him in the leg.

Police said Pascual was trying to catch one of his dogs in his backyard when the puppy bit him. The puppy reportedly became aggressive after it heard the loud barking of other dogs in the backyard.

According to neighbors, Pascual started catching and selling stray dogs when he was 21 years old. Initially, some of his neighbors complained that Pascual would catch their dogs without their permission.

His neighbors said Pascual would buy dogs for P100 to P150, and sell these for P400 to P600 to restaurants and eateries in Malolos City, Marilao, Bocaue and Baliuag, where dog meat is served as a specialty dish. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*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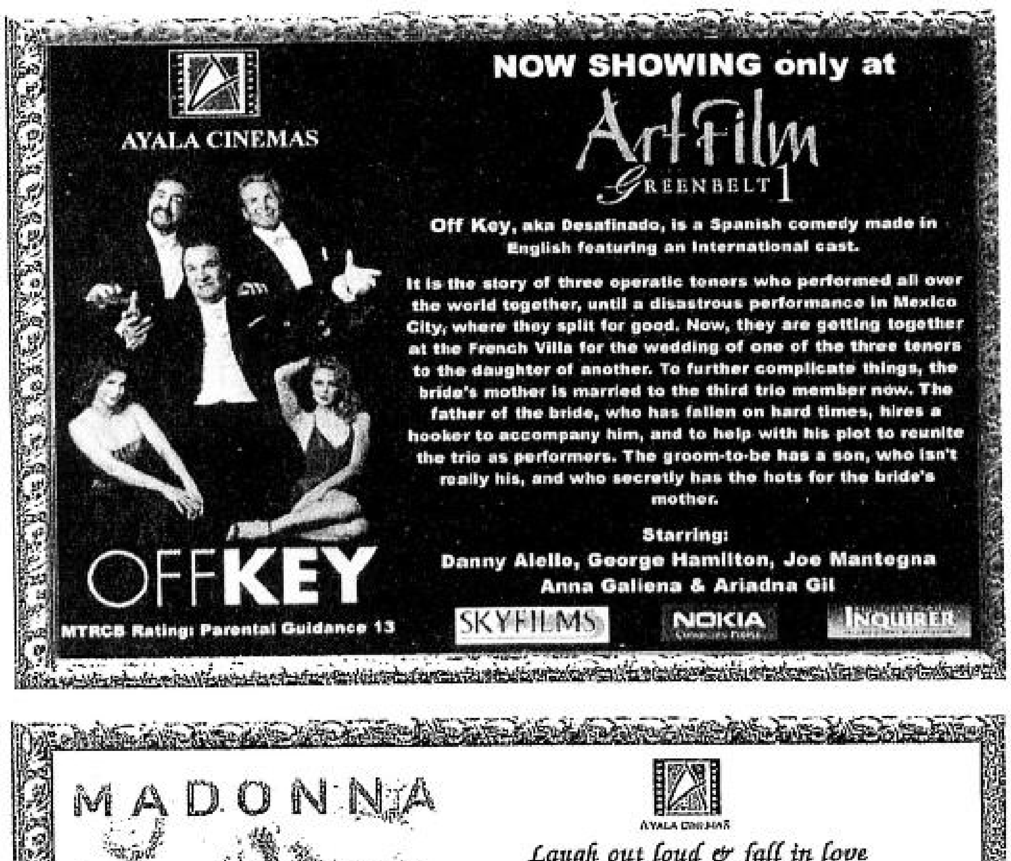
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NOW SHOWING only at
ArtFilm Greenbelt 1
Off Key, aka Desafinado, is a Spanish comedy made in English featuring an international cast.
It is the story of three operatic tenors who performed all over the world together, until a disastrous performance in Mexico City, where they split for good. Now, they are getting together at the French Villa for the wedding of one of the three tenors to the daughter of another. To further complicate things, the bride's mother is married to the third trio member now. The father of the bride, who has fallen on hard times, hires a hooker to accompany him, and to help with his plot to reunite the trio as performers. The groom-to-be has a son, who isn't really his, and who secretly has the hots for the bride's mother.
Starring:
Danny Aiello, George Hamilton, Joe Mantegna
Anna Galiena & Ariadna Gil
OFFKEY
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13
SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER

MADONNA
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Imagine being shipwrecked on a beautiful island - with someone you really can't stand.
Madonna, Adriano Giannini, Bruce Greenwood, Jeanne Tripplehorn & David Thornton
Guy Ritchie directs wife MADONNA in this romantic comedy, where a young sailor (ADRIANO GIANNINI) is cast adrift on an island with his employer, a rich self-centered woman who is used to having her way. Cut off from society, he reverses their roles, stripping her of her pride and controlling her completely. Until, that is, she falls in love with him.
OPENS FEBRUARY 12
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18
COLUMBIA PICTURES NOKIA INQUIRER

MTRCB RATING ➤ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
JET LI
英雄
HERO
OPENS FEBRUARY 5

4 cops in robbery-kidnap

By Philip Tubeza

PO3 Lauro Rolusta, 33, and three other Manila policemen robbed and kidnapped a businesswoman and her 11-year-old son in Quiapo, Manila on Thursday night.

But their temerity did them in. They set the pay-off for the victims' ransom right in the lobby of the Western Police District headquarters.

The arresting officers, who had set an entrapment operation, were able to collar only Rolusta.

Rolusta, of Bulacan St. Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City is in hot water for his participation in the robbery and kidnapping of Omaira C. Umpar and her son Amir, 11, said Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, WPD Director.

Rolusta, a WPD-District Intelligence and Investigation Division agent, is being interrogated to identify his accomplices.

Initial investigation showed that the suspects pretended they were on an anti-drugs operation.

Police said the victims allegedly went out of their house at around 7 p.m. to go to a money changer because Umpar's other son was going to a haj or a pilgrimage to Mecca.

But right after the mother and son left their home, the suspects pounced on the victims, forced them into a Toyota Revo, and took the P92,000 haj money.

The suspects did not bring the mother and child to a police station and instead drove around the area. They allegedly changed cars twice.

Umpar's daughter, Noraina, told investigators that she received a call that night from a man who he was a PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and that the Umpars had to shelve out P500,000 for the victims' release.

Norania's cousin was able to convince the suspects to lower the ransom to P200,000.

The suspect then told Norania's cousin to have the money ready and wait at the gate of the WPD headquarters.

Norania and her cousin then asked for help from the police andf an entrapment operation was set.

One of the suspects was able to run away but Rolusta was collared. Umpar and her son were later released.

Dismal PNP exams

THE LATEST round of the Philippine National Police entrance and promotional exams posted less than stellar results, the National Police Commission announced yesterday.

Less than half or 44.27% of the total number of examinees passed the exams, a total of 11, 965 out of 27, 028 examinees, according to Napolcom officer-in-charge Linda Malenab-Hornilla.

She added that the 5.51% rate of successful examinees for the promotion for Police Superintendent exam is the lowest in history since the Napolcom started giving out the exams in 1991.

An estimate of 48.54% of those who took the PNP entrance exam passed, or 8,212 out of 16, 930. The entrance exam is a requirement for an applicant's appointment to the rank of Police Officer 1.

Of the promotional examinees, 58.38% of those who took the tests for police officer exam passed, the highest rate recorded for this batch of examinees. On the other hand, 30.28% successfully took the Senior Police Officer exam and 12.13% passed the Police Inspector exam.

The tests were conducted in October last year. *Leila Salaverria*

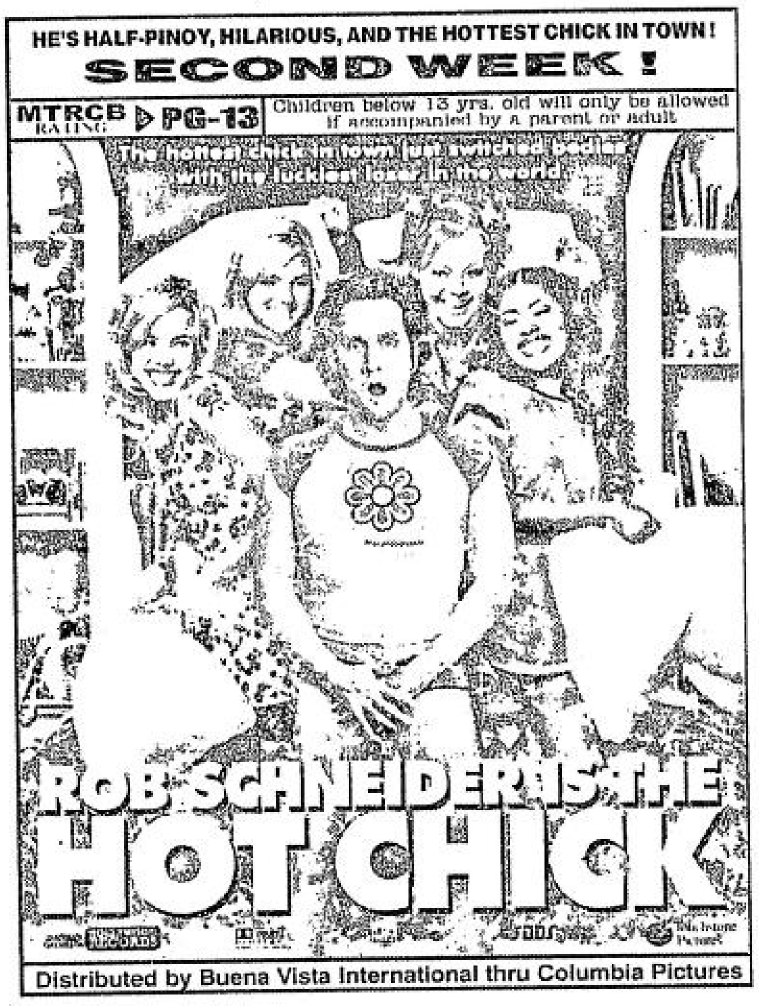
He passed test?

ROOKIE policeman PO1 Jose Lonmar Fiel Zapatos, 28, rode a taxi from Mandaluyong to Pandacan, Manila on Thursday night.

When he got to his destination, Zapatos refused to pay his P99 fare, poked his gun at the driver, and then opened fire indiscriminately.

Zapatos, of the PNP Fire Security Battalion-Special Action Force, at the Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig, Metro Manila, is in hot water after Manila policemen collared him, said investigator PO3 Delfin Silva, of the Western Police District-General Assignment Section.

Complainant driver Antonio Prames Padayao, 44, of 164 Int. 2, Kilusan St. Balara, Quezon City escaped injury. *P Tubeza*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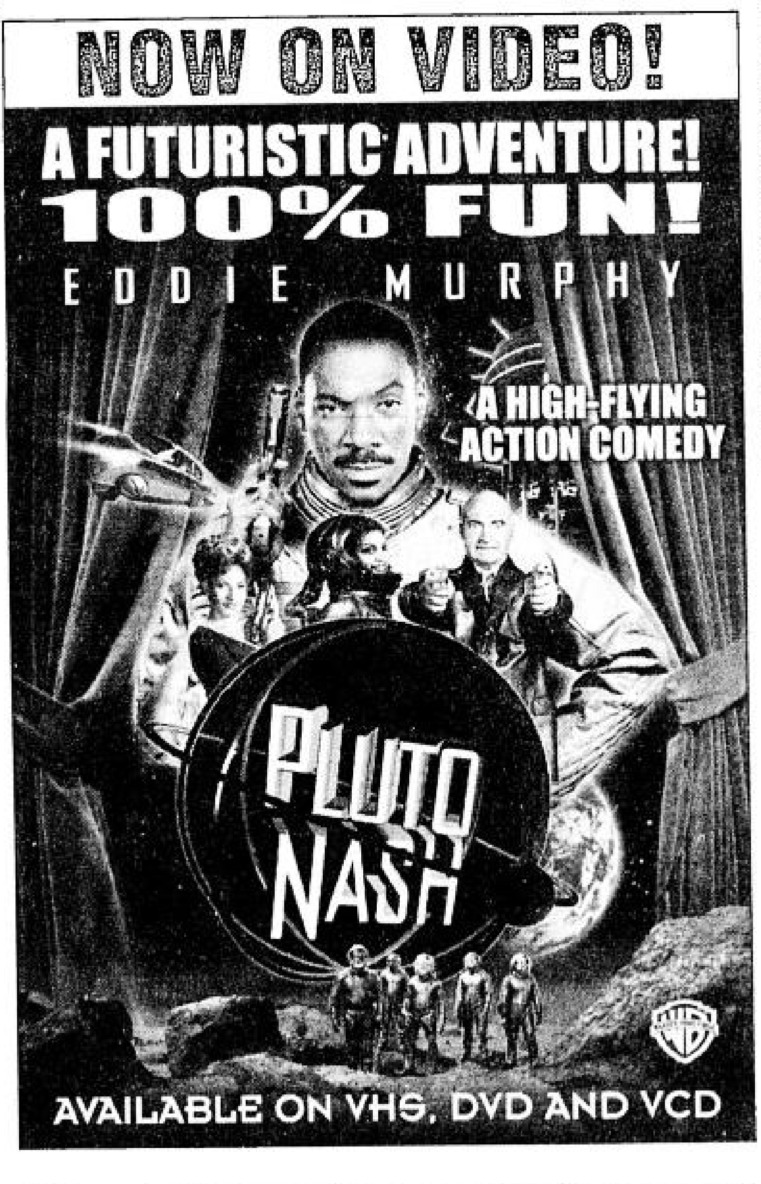
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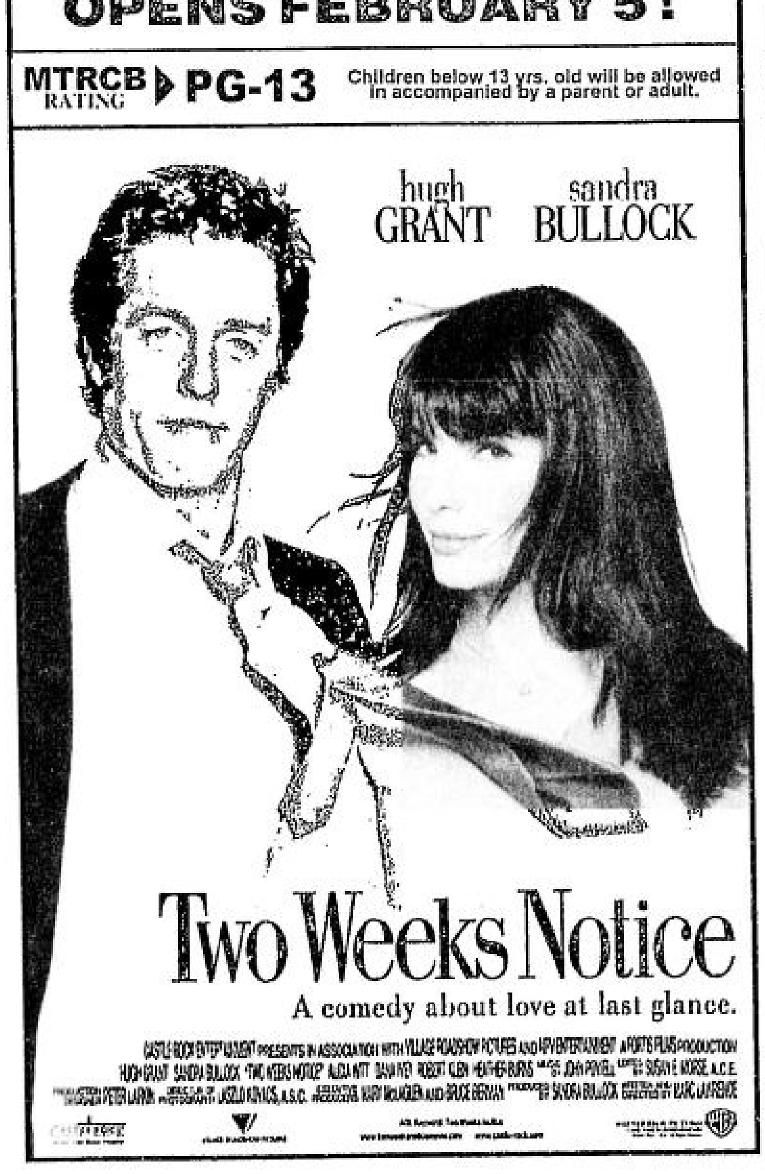
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Ali 2	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 3	CATCH ME IF U CAN
Ali 4	FEMME FATALE
Ali 5	HOT CHICK
Ali 6	TRY SEVENTEEN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	8 MILE
Farmers 2	THE RING
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 3 & 5	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
FEB 8	LANI MISALUCHA CONCERT
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 1	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM
FEB 2	3 PM / 5 PM
FEB 3	10 AM / 3 PM

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MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BIYAHERA / POSSESSION
ODEON	FEMME FATAL
ODEON-2	SAMBAHIN ANG PURI / TUKAAN
ROBEN	SUKDULAN
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	RED DRAGON · TRAP
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	DERAITED / BLISS FOR PLEASURE
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	SUKDULAN
REMAR-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
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A	SUKDULAN
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
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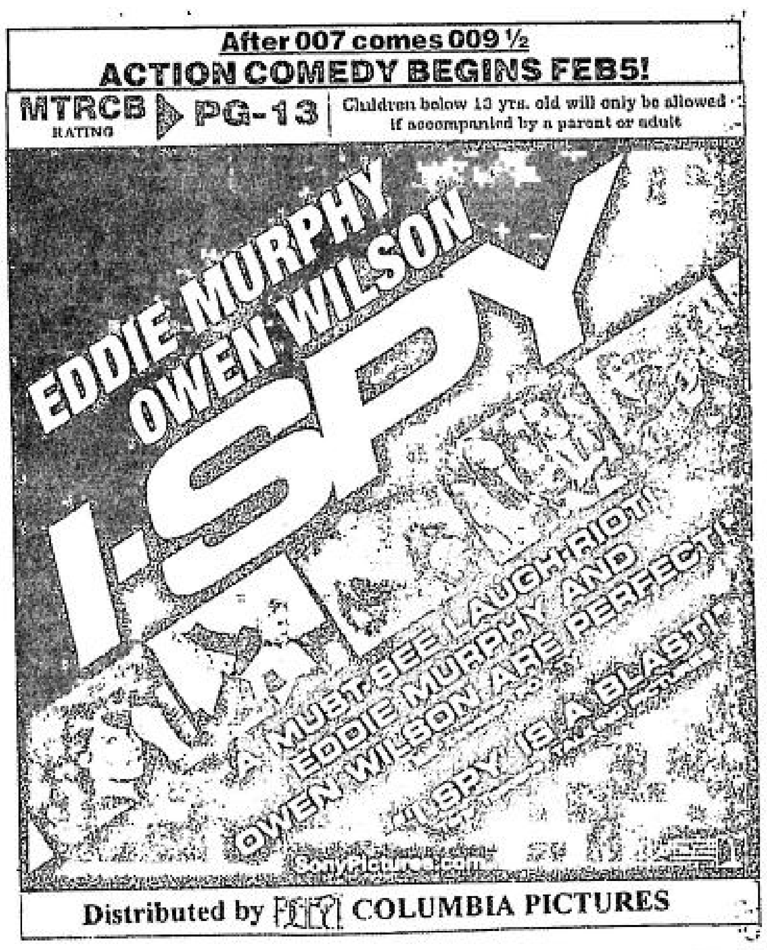
CINEMA-1	TRY SEVENTEEN
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	8 MILE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ONE HOUR PHOTO
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	BANGKERO
CINEMA-8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BELOW
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FEMME FATALLE
CINEMA-12	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-14	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-15	THE RING
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	DAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA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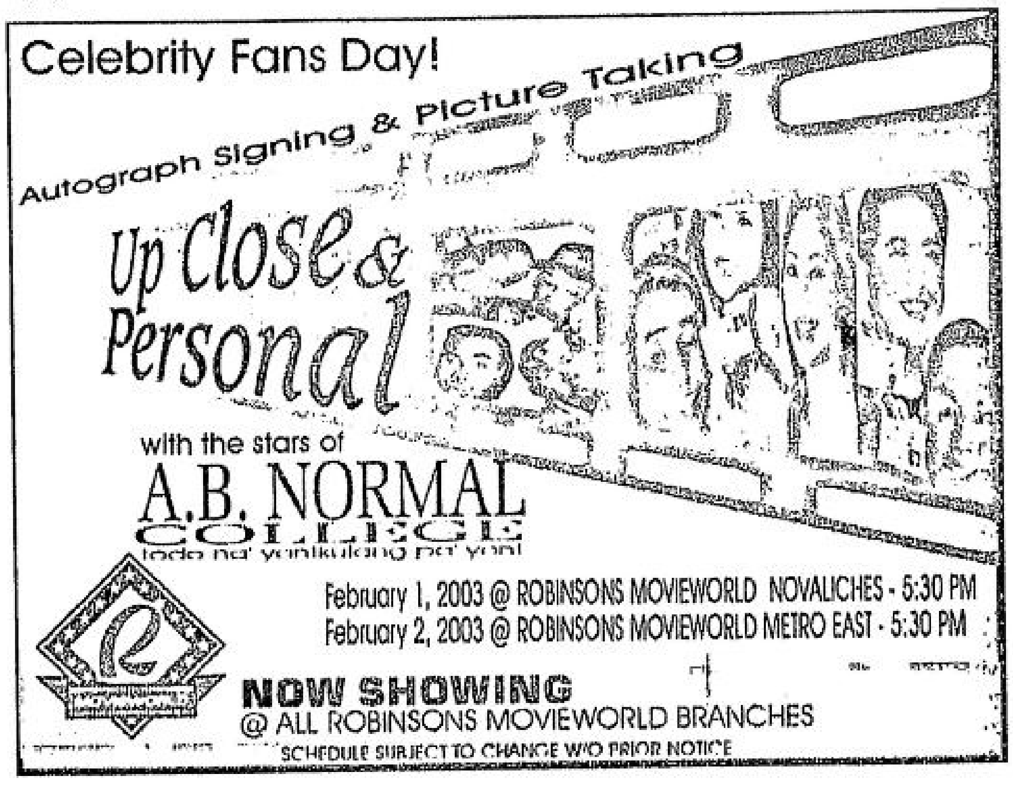
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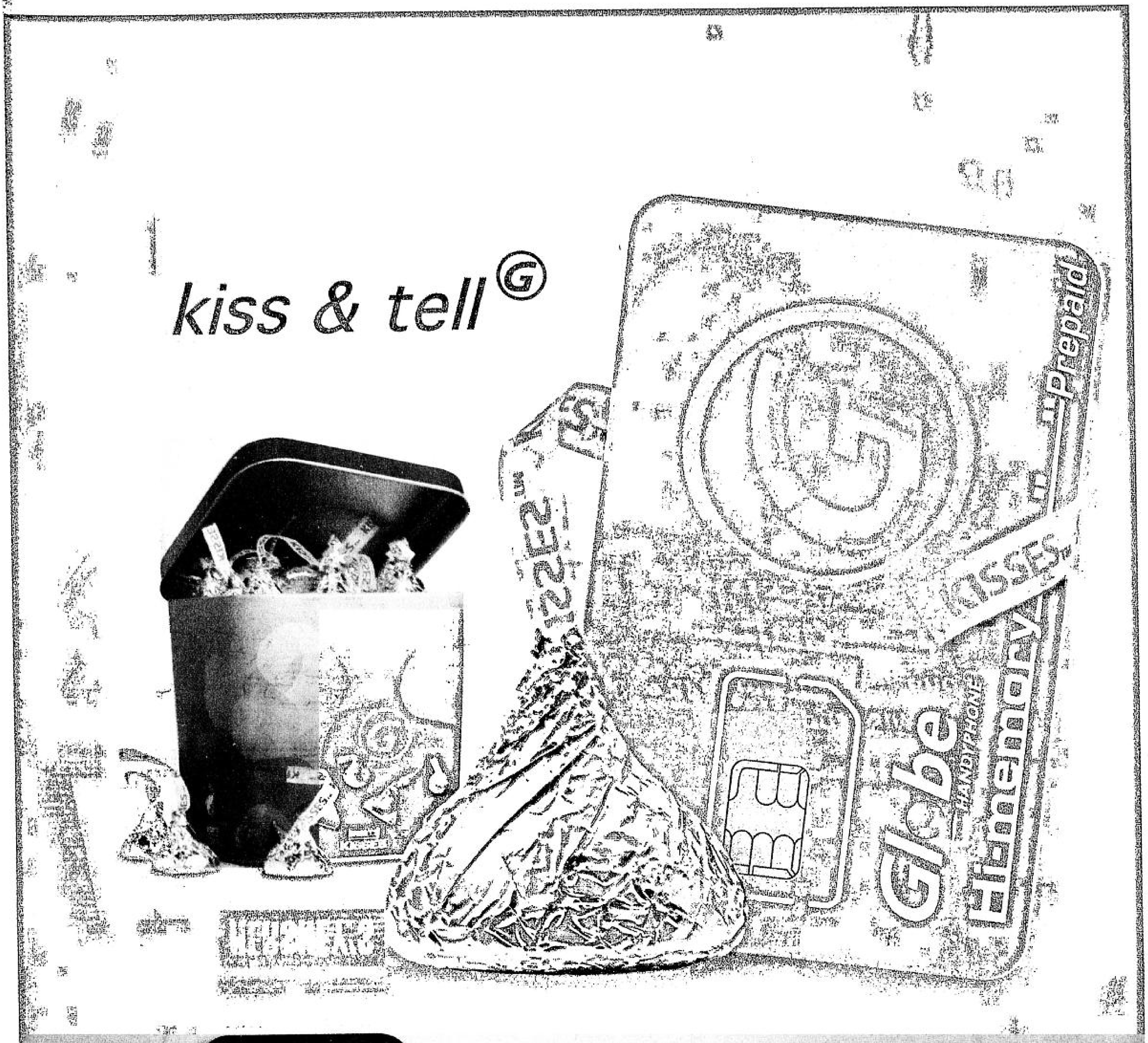

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2. An electronic raffle will be conducted to draw the grand prize winner on April 2, 2003, 4:00 p.m., at 4/F Globe Telecom Plaza Tower 2, corner Pioneer and Madison Streets, Mandaluyong City.

There will be one (1) grand prize winner of a Trip for two (2) to Hershey's Chocolate World in Pennsylvania, USA. Prize is convertible to cash but not transferable. It's inclusive of round trip tickets, 5 days and 4 nights hotel accommodation and $1,000 pocket money. Winner shall be responsible for securing travel documents and for payment of travel taxes and other travel-related expenses. Trip should be availed on or before September 30, 2003.

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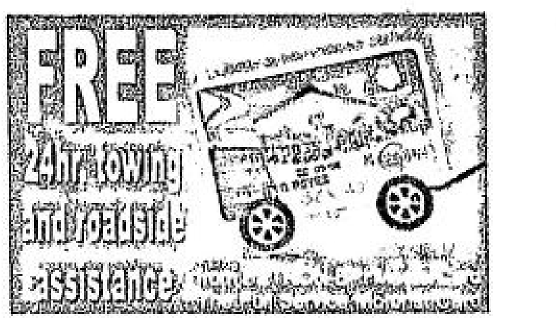

Rough road ahead seen for RP economy

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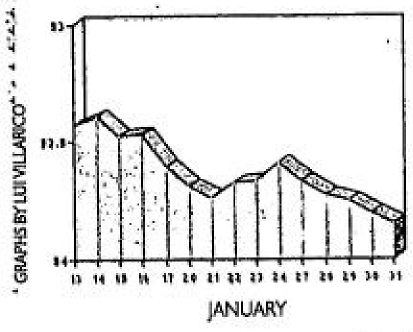

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As of 5 p.m., Jan. 31, 2003

¥119.20 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 31, 2003

GOLD: $365.90-366.40

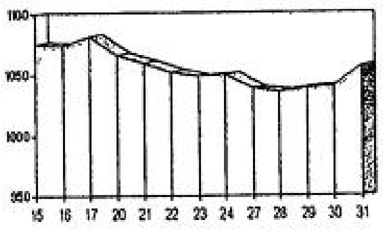
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 30, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks surge 1.62% on strong GDP

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JANUARY



(See stock market report on Page B2)

THE STOCK market welcomed the Lunar New Year with cheers yesterday, rising 1.62 percent to its highest level in two weeks as investors absorbed news of solid economic growth in 2002.

As traders cheered a traditional Chinese dragon dance on the exchange floor, the main index closed 16.81 points higher at 1,056.69.

Turnover fell to a relatively thin P178.67 million from Thursday's P403.7 million. In the broader market, gainers beat losers 34 to 13, with 33 stocks unchanged.

The index gained 0.5 percent on the week and is 3.76 percent higher since the start of the year.

"The market liked the first wave of earnings results and the good GDP figures. But turnover remained thin due to external worries," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

The economy grew in 2002 at its strongest pace since Asia's financial crisis, the government said on Thursday, with gross domestic product

STOCKS/ B3

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S economic report card for 2002 was good, but not good enough to negate jitters caused by an impending war in the Middle East and the government's ballooning budget deficit.

Asked why the better-than-expected economic figures were not translating to better business confidence and more bullish markets, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said: "It's not reflective because this (prospects of) war is occupying everybody. There's nothing we can do about that."

But Buenaventura noted that the latest economic performance supported the 747 economic program—which aims for a 7 percent growth for the next seven years—espoused by newly appointed Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

Others agreed that serious concerns were stealing the thunder from the surprisingly high 4.6-percent growth in gross domestic product for 2002, the best performance posted by the Philippines since the currency turmoil erupted in 1997.

"If the deficit had been smaller, the numbers would have had a much better impact," said former Economic Planning Secretary Felipe Medalla.

Nevertheless, Medalla welcomed the fact that "the economy is getting stronger than ever."

Also causing some concerns were the discrepancies in the statistical data on the country's balance of payment surplus, but he noted that these were "honest mistakes" and that countries with bigger resources like the United States also encounter such errors.

In order for growth to trickle down to the ordinary people, Medalla said the bottom line would be for the government to collect taxes and spend its funds well.

"That's the central role of the government—make that those who have the ability to pay will pay, share their good fortune and make sure that they money is spent on the right things," Medalla said.

"Right now, it's not difficult to think of the right things: better police force, better infrastructure, better schools, better basic health. What is harder to think of is where to get the money," he noted.

AB Capital Securities economist Jose Vistan said the strong economic report card for 2002 had, at the very least, prevented the stock market from following the declines seen in the US and Japanese markets.

"There are still a lot of worries on crude oil, US-Iraq war and the peso," Vistan said.

Buenventura, for his part, said he hoped the local currency would not slide back to the all-time lows in previous years despite the uncertainities of the Middle East war.

Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief market strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the strong economic momentum seen in the fourth quarter of 2002 could be sustained this year provided that the

ROUGH/ B2

Uniden moves RP plant to China; 1,200 lose jobs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

JAPANESE communication equipment maker Uniden Corp. has given the pink slip to 1,200 employees in its Laguna factory, which it would close down with the relocation of its production to China.

An employee of Uniden said management has informed the employees of its subsidiary, Uniden Laguna Philippines Inc. (ULPI), that it was closing down the plant by Feb. 24.

The same employee said management has assured the workforce of its 750-square-meter manufacturing facility at the Light Industry Science Park in Laguna that they would be given proper compensation.

Uniden has shifted its production to China where labor costs were half of their levels in the Philippines. Uniden has been suffering heavy losses from its Philippine operations.

The company's sales dropped 1.23 percent to P1.986 billion in 2001. It posted losses of P354.62 million in 2001 and P650.52 million in 2000. UPLI ranked number 260 among the country's top 500 corporations in 2001, down sharply from number 236 in 2000.

Uniden had infused P134 million into the Laguna factory in 2001 to produce global positioning system (GPS) cellular phones to compensate for falling sales of cordless phones.

Uniden has invested P1.319 billion in its Laguna plant since 1995 where it has churned out cordless phones, scanner, pager, radar detector, marine radio and CB (citizen's band) radio.

In 1999, Uniden closed down its factory at the FTI industrial estate in Taguig, Rizal, which rendered roughly 2,800 employees jobless and transferred 80 percent of the equipment to Laguna and the balance to China, its only other overseas factory. The move was part of Uniden's global streamlining operations in response to ebbing demand for analog cellular phones, pagers, mobile or citizen band radios, and radio scanners.

Lured by low labor costs, Uniden transferred its production from Taiwan to the Philippines in 1988. From an initial production output of 1.3 million units, Uniden's production peaked at 4.7 million units in 1995.

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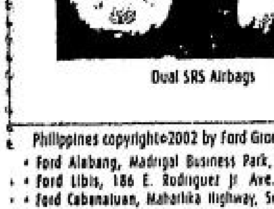
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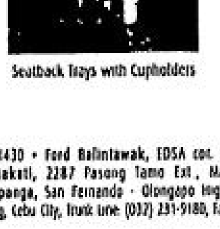
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Bangko Sentral sees higher '03 inflation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is bracing for a sharper uptick in consumer prices starting January following the threats of war in the Middle East.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura yesterday told reporters the country's inflation rate in January likely accelerated by at least 2.8 percent, but not higher than 3.2 percent, compared to a year ago.

The inflation rate in December stood at only 2.6 percent.

Buenaventura's projection for January stood much higher than the 2.6-2.8 percent range earlier forecast by the National Economic and Development Authority.

"This is due to the rise in oil prices and I understand the prices of some food items also increased," he said. "But it will probably be more on the lower end."

For the full year, however, the BSP chief said he was expecting inflation to average closer to 5.5 percent, the upper end of the 4.5-5.5 percent range programmed by the government.

While the BSP believed it could stay neutral with its key interest rates during the first semester of the year, it has acknowledged that some tightening might be needed in the second semester.

Monetary authorities usually keep a tighter lid on liquidity when consumer prices are on an uptrend or when its currency is under attack.

By clamping down on liquidity through either an increase in interest rates or the reserve requirement on banks, the BSP prevents consumer spending sprees and creates more incentive to save money.

The National Statistics Office is set to announce last month's inflation rate on Wednesday.

The country's inflation rate for 2002 averaged at 3.1 percent, still much lower than the government's target range of 4.5-5.5 percent. The government is targeting exactly the same range for this year, already taking into account the possible impact of the tension between the United States and Iraq especially on oil prices.

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That's a lot of bull's hit

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TODAY is the first day of February in the year of our Lord 2003. In the shortcut language of this "tex" (i.e. "cllfon") generation, today is simply 1-2-3. Be careful.

In the language of my crowd, which is the "disco" (i.e. "ballroom dancing") generation, "1-2-3" actually means a fraudulent scheme. In short, it's a racket.

When you say Ms Purificacion Bagongbuhaghag was a "1-2-3" victim, for example, it may mean she agreed to marry an old, fat, ugly, but FAKE millionaire.

In circulation today, based on word from money men, and a few women, are P500 and P1,000 bills which are already "non-negotiable." They are no longer "legal tenders."

In other words, in the language which some senators and congressmen can probably understand, hopefully, you can no longer use the bills to pay for GROs.

To avoid being ripped off, you must look for green line markings, lengthwise, on them—meaning, the bills, not the GROs.

* * *

ACCORDING to Gloriaetta herself, and not just any member of her economic team (i.e. *alalay*), with a growth rate of 4.6 percent, the economy did quite well last year.

Now some of you may try to conclude that, by announcing the economic figures herself, Gloriaetta was gloating. She was.

But who would not? That is the highest growth rate since the Asian financial crisis erupted in 1997, or about five years ago.

Moreover, if you believe all the dime-a-dozen-million forecasts in business, the growth rate may indicate we are nearing the end of an economic down cycle.

They say this economy has shown a seven-year up-and-down cycle for a long time in the past, even before Magellan learned how to do the pachanga.

Thus the 4.6-growth rate last year may likely be interpreted as the clue to a possible signal of an apparent start of a much wished for recovery. Something like that.

* * *

BUT of course some so-called analysts could not believe the growth rate, as it was announced by Gloriaetta, which was the official figure.

But who knows what the UN official figure was? According to the analysts, you see, the official figures were so way off the dime-a-dozen-million forecast figures.

Correct me if I'm infallible, but I thought that forecasts, precisely, should not, could not, hit bull's eye ever. It's just a forecast, forgodsakes.

But can you believe the analysts? Results are incredible, to them, because they are way off their own forecast.

I thought it should be the other way around. It's not the real actual result that's way off. I thought it should be, well, all their forecast is way off.

More and more in business today, no wonder, are using another term for the way-off forecast. And that is, it's a lot of bull's hit.

* * *

STILL, a high growth rate, or rather the "unbelievable" high growth rate, does not necessarily mean that the economy did well last year.

The growth came mainly in agriculture. This is the sector which provides a lot of jobs, sure, but it also does not pay a lot of taxes.

That explains the weak tax collection. In a growing economy, you would think that the government would be raking it in like the movie stars did.

The agriculture sector, in truth, particularly the small farmers, did not pay a lot of taxes, because this country has been trying to help them improve their lot.

Actually, most of the tax in the agriculture sector goes to the NPA, or at least those who pretend to be NPAs but are actually plain extortionists.

My uncle stopped his small business of raising goats because, at the rate he was paying the "revolutionary tax" (i.e. extortion), he was making a living only for the NPAs.

* * *

ONE bad news about the economy last year, if you ask me, so you better not, is the continuous downtrend in the manufacturing sector.

Of all the economic sectors, including the actor-turned-politician industry, manufacturing offers the biggest potential for jobs.

Well, our farm land does not, cannot, expand anymore, and as for services, a good number of the "entertainers" are finding greener pasture overseas, and so they eat grass.

But nobody can blame this cute administration for the poor showing of manufacturing. The sector has been on a downtrend since the time of Kuya Eddie.

At that time, we wanted to show off, and so we adopted the policy of slashing tariffs and duties much faster and much bigger than the other countries.

Our industries were not prepared. Most of them tumbled down. All the safety nets which our government promised were like my socks. You know, full of big holes.

* * *

ADDED to the show-off policy of our government is the punishment from some law abiding citizens with short names who are normally called smugglers.

Under the show-off policy, we would get rid of smuggling. High tariff was the biggest come-on to smugglers. So we erased tariff from the face of our part of the earth.

Unfortunately, smuggling was not profitable only because those sons of their mothers could avoid paying tariff with a little help from the Bureau of Customs guys.

The problem was the 10-percent VAT. By avoiding the VAT, which everybody must pay, except the movie stars, the bastards could always undercut the locals.

Cheating on the VAT made smugglers more competitive. Already, the smuggled goods were made cheap through the untiring efforts of slave labor in China.

* * *

NOW you have all sorts of smuggling. Outright smuggling is the crude variety. The more refined, civilized form of cheating is called "technical smuggling."

That is apparently what the Department of Finance is trying to address, when it issued a new revenue regulation on vehicle taxation.

Of course the local car companies, if there's such a thing, do not like the regulation. They said the DOF should leave any change in the tax system to Congress.

Nice try. The car companies are saying that, even if they are cheating us blind, the government cannot do anything.

It should be up to Congress to do the changes, which should only take a short period of forever, meaning, they can just cheat us forever and ever, amen.

The DOF said it should plug the loopholes in vehicle taxation, which the car companies enjoyed with impunity, i.e. right in front of the government's eyes.

Take the tax on SUVs. Local car companies imported "2x4" SUVs, because the loopholes allowed them to pay much lower taxes on those than on the "4x4."

But the two types, the "2x4" and the "4x4," have the same difference. You derive one from the other by adding only a couple of pieces of champoy or something.

SEC warns public against dealing with 4 firms

By Michelle V. Remo

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has issued a public warning against dealing with four companies—Five Vision Consultancy Inc., Intercontinental Services Inc., Conrad Group and Associates Inc. and Servlink Cargo Inc.—for engaging in investment consultancy, investment taking, trading of securities and lending without any license.

The SEC said it issued the warning due to the "possible serious misrepresentations" that these companies might be doing.

The SEC move followed a call by Sen. Loren Legarda for the corporate regulator and the Bureau of Internal Revenue to intensify their efforts in going after dubious investment companies that were offering clients very high returns on their investments.

The senator said that there have been advertisements by such investment companies offering more than 100 percent in guaranteed annual returns, arguing that such promised amounts of return could be used to lure investors.

The warning also came after the Makati fiscal's office indicted last Monday Multitel International Holdings Inc., owned by Rosario and Saturnino Baladjay, for selling unregistered securities to the public.

If found guilty, the Baladjays would serve seven to 20 years in prison for every count of unregistered sale of security, according to the SEC.

The commission has so far received 162 cases of unregistered sale of securities by Multitel. It said the agency was expecting more cases of unregistered sales to be filed.

Rough road . . .

From page B1

impact of a war in the Middle East and the impact of the El Niño weather phenomenon would be mitigated.

"We're seeing good signals from the market. The 91-day treasury bill rates have gone down and inflation rate has gone lower," he said.

The sustained economic growth, Ravelas said, could be supported by the government's implementation of new economic laws and macroeconomic stablization policies.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. economist Chelsea Dipasupil said she was surprised by the latest growth report.

"Agriculture is performing way beyong expectations. El Niño had a mild effect," she said.

However, Dipasupil noted that the rebound in the industry sector was not consistent with the slump in manufacturing volumes as reported by the National Statistis Office.

"The reported volume of production index has been declining for the past four months and it (latest report) can't seem to confirm whether manufacturing has been contributing," she said.

Neri himself expressed a cautious outlook on the manufacturing sector.

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Stocks surge 1.62% on strong GDP

From page B1

expanding 4.6 percent for the full year and 5.8 percent in the fourth quarter.

Analysts said the sustainability of a rally would depend largely on how developments in the Middle East play out.

"Investors are looking forward to the UN Security Council meeting on Feb. 5, where the US will press its case against Iraq, for more direction," said BPI Securities stocks analyst Roberto Cano.

Vistan, who saw the market moving within a range of 1,040 to 1,080 points on Monday, said corporate earnings would also help set the direction.

"The market will be driven by releases of full-year results in the coming days," he said.

Globe Telecom, the country's second-largest telephone firm, rose 3.96 percent or P20 to P525 after reporting a 59-percent surge in net income for 2002 on Wednesday. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, January 31, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	18	17.25	18	66,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36	36.5	36	36.5	515,600
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	18,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30	31	30	31	291,900
Prudential Bank	400	400	400	400	2,000
Philippine National Bank	26.5	28	26.5	27	19,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	18	17.5	18	4,600
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	150,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	935	935	935	935	420
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	13.25	12.75	13.25	12,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	40,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	510	530	510	530	7,260
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	10,400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.013	0.015	0.013	0.015	2,900,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	790,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	295	297.5	292.5	295	61,750
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	12,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	9	8.7	9	117,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	13	12.25	12.75	1,466,400
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.74	1.64	1.74	6,536,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	1	0.96	1	290,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.56	411,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	152,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.2	2.26	2.2	2.26	20,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	218,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	34	34	34	5,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	56.5	31,900
San Miguel Corp. B	64	65	64	65	340,900
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	40,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	2,461,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.28	2.28	244,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2	2.1	89,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.155	2,370,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	50,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	460,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.3	5,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	8.9	9.4	8.9	9.4	177,000
Ionics Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	2,310,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	490,000
Music Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.1	0.11	800,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,130,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	168,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	6.8	8.1	6.8	8.1	33,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.31	0.34	0.31	0.34	4,100,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.085	0.085	600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13.25	13	13.25	48,600
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	55,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	1,669,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	3,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.91	0.98	0.91	0.98	3,040,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.96	2	1.96	2	460,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	17,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	5,977,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	3,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	6,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	150,000
Omico Corp.	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	6,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	750,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	15,000,000
Pacifica	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,271,620	31,392,200.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	53,070,852	101,993,153.00
PRO	15,223,000	43,413,400.00
Mining	21,400,000	1,791,600.00
OIL	20,000,000	76,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	110,965,472	178,666,353.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	384.64	UP 8.26
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,505.23	UP 22.34
PRO	456.07	UP 5.74
Mining	1,305.63	DOWN 23.15
OIL	1.05	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	627.98	UP 1.23
Composite	1,056.69	UP 16.81

NO. OF ADVANCES: 34; NO. OF DECLINES: 13; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 33; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 80; NO. OF TRADES: 1,320

CURRENCIES

Jan. 31, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923702	1.000000	53.799000
Japan	Yen	0.007762	0.008403	0.452100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.529097	1.655400	89.058900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118428	0.128210	6.897600
Switzerland	Franc	0.681447	0.737735	39.689400
Canada	Dollar	0.604557	0.654493	35.211100
Singapore	Dollar	0.532026	0.575971	30.986700
Australia	Dollar	0.541665	0.586407	31.548100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.450269	2.652661	142.710500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246334	0.266681	14.347200
Brunei	Dollar	0.530498	0.574317	30.897700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021607	0.023392	1.258500
UAE	Dirham	0.251519	0.272294	14.649100
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.082600	58.242800
Argentina	Peso	0.284216	0.307692	16.553500
Brazil	Real	0.259832	0.281294	15.133300
Denmark	Kroner	0.134496	0.145605	7.833400
India	Rupee	0.019344	0.020942	1.126700
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243112	0.263193	14.159500
Mexico	New Peso	0.084510	0.091491	4.922100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502040	0.543508	29.240200
Norway	Kroner	0.134349	0.145446	7.824800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015871	0.017182	0.924400
South Africa	Rand	0.107161	0.116013	6.241400
Korea	Won	0.000794	0.000860	0.046300
Sweden	Kroner	0.108801	0.117788	6.336900
Syria	Pound	0.017936	0.019417	1.044600
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026736	0.028944	1.557200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000481	0.000521	0.028000

DISCLOSURES

PREMIERE Entertainment Productions Inc. announced the appointment of Anastacio Diaz Jr. as compliance officer under the company's manuals on corporate governance and anti-money laundering.

* * *

REPUBLIC Cement Corp. announced the resignation of Andrew Cunningham as director of the company.

* * *

PHILCOMSAT Holdings Corp. disclosed the appointment of Philip Brodett as compliance officer. Julio Jalandoni was elected as an additional member of the company's executive committee.

* * *

GLOBE Telecom Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 1, 9 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 21 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

FIRST Philippine Holdings Corp. announced the election of Ernesto Rufino Jr. as member of the board. Also, Enrique Quiason was appointed compliance officer while Rodolfo Waga Jr. was appointed assistant compliance officer.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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2002 BMW 525i EXECUTIVE	Php	2,750,000.00
*2002 BMW 325i EXECUTIVE	Php	2,450,000.00
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*2002 BMW 325i EXECUTIVE	Php	2,400,000.00

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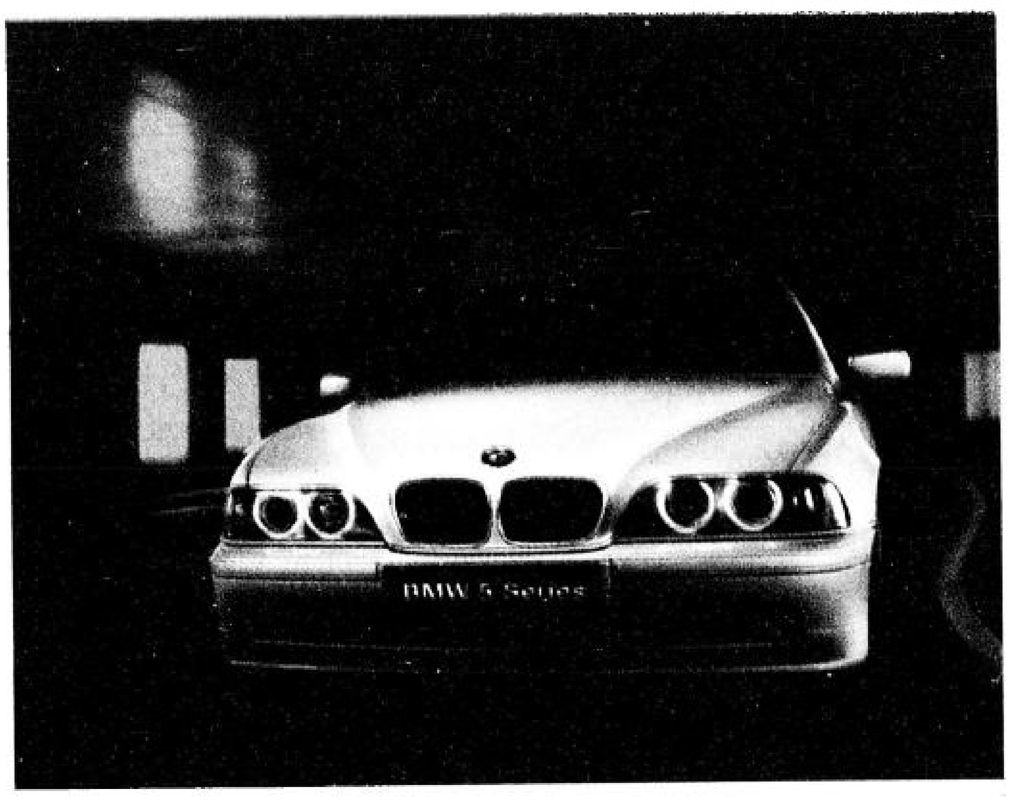

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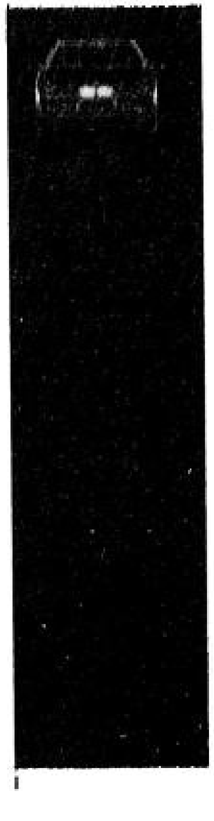

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Japan's unemployment rate at record high, fueling fears of gloom

TOKYO—Japan's jobless rate returned to a record 5.5 percent in December, the government said Friday, underlining fears the world's second largest economy was on the downturn again.

Unemployment worsened from 5.3 percent in November and matched the record level seen in October, as companies fired workers, the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications said.

Japan's average unemployment rate last year was also a record high at 5.4 percent, up from 5.0 percent in 2001.

"It is regrettable that the figures, even by a small margin, worsened," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. "We have to squarely acknowledge this severe reality," he told a news conference.

A ministry official said there was a significant decline in employment in large firms.

The number of workers at firms having at least 500 employees fell 280,000 in December from a year earlier.

Other reports from the ministry also painted a gloomy picture of the Japanese economy.

The ministry said in a separate report that prices in Japan fell 0.9 percent in 2002 in the sharpest annual fall on record. Prices in December fell 0.3 percent from a year earlier in the 40th straight monthly fall.

Toshio Sumitani, economist at Tokai Tokyo Research Center, said the economy was deteriorating.

"The jobless rate will worsen further, going beyond 5.5 percent and coming closer to 6 percent," he said.

"Domestic demand continues to be weak. Private-sector demand has shown no signs of picking up and public works have been cut," he said.

Exports have supported production but it was unlikely exports will remain strong this year, with auto export growth to the United States expected to slow, he said.

The ministry said the number of employed people fell by 710,000 from a year earlier to 62.9 million, while those who were out of work and seeking jobs numbered 3.31 million, down by 60,000.

The number of part-time workers rose 410,000, marking the 12th straight monthly rise, while the number of full-time workers fell 140,000 in the 16 consecutive month of decline. *AFP*

Asean members liberalize investments

JAKARTA, Indonesia—The Association of Southeast Asian Nations said Friday it liberalized investment regulations in manufacturing among seven of its members.

The 10-member regional economic and political group had planned to phase out all restrictions on manufacturing investment by 2010 between its members.

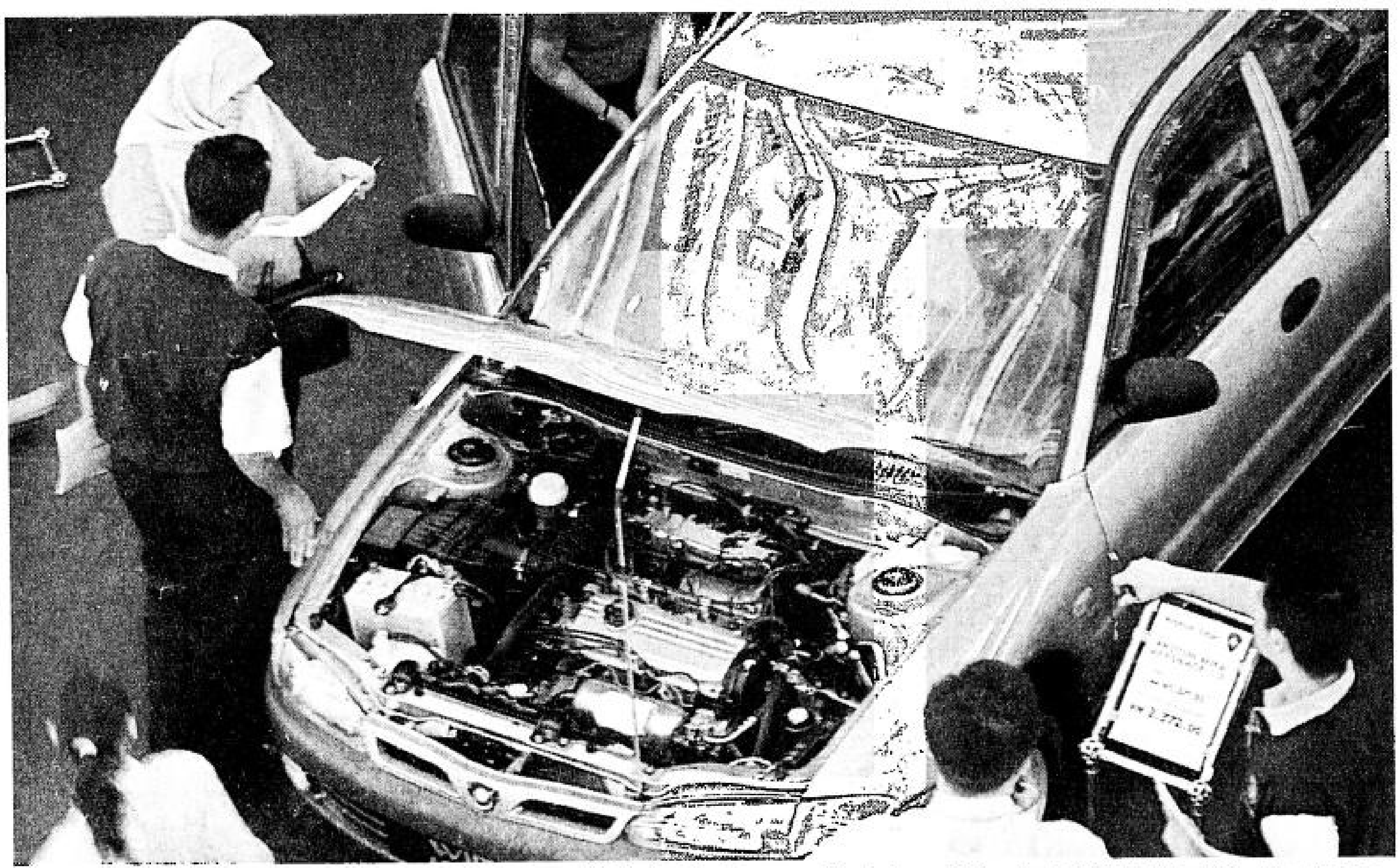
But Asean said in a statement released after a meeting of trade officials in Jakarta that regional governments had decided to bring the date forward to Jan. 1 this year for some members.

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand have agreed to the new timetable.

Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam—Asean's poorest members—still have until 2010 to lower their investment barriers.

"Any Asean investor can now invest in any Asean country and enjoy national investor treatment in those manufacturing sectors that have been previously excluded," the statement said.

Foreign investors outside of Asean, however, will still face investment restrictions. *AP*



CAR salesmen give information to customers during an exhibition in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysian vehicle sales in 2002 hit the highest level in five years but uncertainties due to the Asean Free Trade Area are dampening demand as consumers expect better deals. AFP

Deflation still Japan's top priority

TOKYO—Japan's economy minister on Friday singled out downward spiraling prices as the most urgent problem the government must tackle in the months ahead.

"The top-priority issue is deflation," Heizo Takenaka, who also oversees financial services, said in a speech to Parliament.

Japan has been stuck in an economic slowdown for more than a decade—barely eking out growth in contrast to decades of expansion after World War II.

Deflation, a situation in which continuous price falls drag down workers' income and employers' profits, has hobbled the world's second-largest economy for about the past four years.

Takenaka has urged more cooperation between the government and the central bank to reverse the trend, while stopping short of suggesting specific measures.

The Bank of Japan already has slashed interest rates to near zero and has been flooding the banking system with cash to encourage lending to struggling companies.

Bank Governor Masaru Hayami is retiring in March, encouraging hopes among some politicians that someone more sympathetic to anti-deflation steps will take his place.

Hayami has repeatedly said that pumping more money into the financial sector will do little without fixing commercial banks' bad-loan problems, streamlining government regulations to encourage new businesses and wiping out waste in government.

Takenaka reiterated in his policy speech that Japan remained committed to a government plan announced late last year to prod banks to dispose of their bad loans, officially estimated at 43 trillion yen (US$361 billion).

But he has not promised a quick fix. *AP*

US economic growth slows to a crawl in fourth quarter

WASHINGTON—US economic growth slowed to a crawl in the last quarter of 2002, as Iraqi war clouds, slumping stocks and job fears cramped spending, government figures showed Thursday.

Gross domestic product grew at a 0.7-percent annualized pace, down sharply from a 4-percent growth in the previous three months.

"The lagging stock market, a lack of faith in corporate earnings reports and the looming threat of war with Iraq all combined to restrain economic growth in the fourth quarter," said Wells Fargo chief economist Sung Won Sohn.

Growth in consumer spending, the biggest engine in the economy, slid to a near-decade low as purchases of new automobiles evaporated.

Spending by consumers rose 1 percent, the smallest increase since early 1993, after a 4.2-percent growth the previous quarter.

Consumer concerns have been fed by sliding share prices with the Dow Jones index slumping nearly 17 percent last year, and by employment with the jobless rate stuck at 6.0 percent in December.

"With consumer spending the weakest in a decade, the lack of demand has businesses nervous about investing and hiring. This in turn has kept the job market in a holding pattern," Sohn said.

Business investment—the missing ingredient of the recovery—rose 1.5 percent in the fourth quarter, the first improvement after two years of uninterrupted declines.

Iraq remained a constraint. "The economy has struggled in the aftermath of the 'tech wreck' and as a result of uncertainty over Iraq," said Sal Guatieri, Chicago-based economist at Bank of Montreal.

"This year, we should see much more solid growth. The big wild card is Iraq."

For 2002 overall, annual economic output advanced 2.4 percent, up from 0.3 percent in 2001.

"Iraq is still looming over us," Prudential Securities analyst Bryan Piskorowski said.

The slow growth underscored the need for tax cuts, White House Council of Economic Advisors chair Glenn Hubbard said in an interview with AFP's financial news wire subsidiary, AFX News.

"We have got downside weakness in the economy," he said.

Analysts said growth would pick up in the first three months of 2003, driven by rock-bottom interest rates and tax cuts, with a greater acceleration likely when war clouds clear.

Federal Reserve policymakers agreed Wednesday to leave key interest rates at a four-decade low, banking on an economic recovery once the war and job fears recede.

US President George W. Bush promised in his State of the Union Address on Tuesday to boost growth and create jobs with a $674-billion stimulus package.

"While the economy did falter in the fourth quarter, conditions are really not that bad," said Joel Naroff of Naroff Economic Advisors.

"Don't be surprised if first quarter growth exceeds 3.0 percent, barring a negative effect from a possible war. But the Fed was correct. We need the geopolitical risks to be resolved before consistently strong growth can reappear." *AFP*

Coca-Cola to cut around 1,000 jobs

ATLANTA, Georgia—Coca-Cola Co. said Thursday it would cut about 1,000 jobs as part of a reorganization of North American operations.

The beverage giant said it would integrate operations of its three principal units in North America, including Coca-Cola North America, Coca-Cola Fountain and The Minute Maid Company, as well as operations at Odwalla and Danone Waters of North America.

"This will make our North American business simpler in process, sharper in strategic focus, and more competitive in the market," chief executive Doug Daft said in a note to employees made public. *AFP*

República de Cuba

VISITORS walk by the Cuba Pavilion of the Kolkata Book Fair in Calcutta. The Kolkata Book Fair is one of the biggest book fairs in the world. AFP

Healthy Q3 seen for top Japanese automakers

TOKYO—Japanese carmakers Honda Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Corp. look set to report healthy third-quarter earnings in the coming week as brisk sales in the United States more than made up for soft demand at home.

A fast-growing Asian car market is also expected to have driven profits in the October-December quarter, analysts say.

The auto industry has been a rare bright spot in the domestic economy due to its heavy dependence on North America, where Japan's top makers have made big strides at the expense of local competitors.

An average of five analysts' forecasts put Honda's third-quarter operating profit at 156 billion yen ($1.3 billion), up 0.8 percent from the year-earlier period when it grew 61 percent.

But net profit was expected to jump an average 26 percent to 104 billion yen, with most analysts citing a sharp drop in costs to hedge against currency risks.

Honda, which reports results under US accounting standards, had quadrupled its non-operating loss to 36 billion yen a year earlier due to the ballooning of such spending with the introduction of a new accounting rule for derivative tools.

"Following an interim results announcement that caused widespread market pessimism, a good set of third-quarter results should revive investor belief in (Honda's) earnings growth," UBS Warburg analyst Takaki Nakanishi wrote in a recent report. *Reuters*

Ted Turner's departure raises questions about the future of CNN

MEDIA mogul Ted Turner. REUTERS

NEW YORK—Ted Turner's departure as vice chair of AOL Time Warner Inc. renewed talk about dormant merger negotiations between CNN and ABC or the possibility that Turner would consider buying back the cable network he founded.

Business analysts were mulling both possibilities on Thursday despite the tremendous obstacles that stood in front of both.

Turner, who founded CNN in 1980 but, through AOL Time Warner corporate infighting, lost any control over the network in recent years, was reportedly opposed to CNN merging operations with the Walt Disney Co.-owned ABC News.

Merger talks were put on hold by AOL Time Warner chief executive Richard Parsons last month. He said figuring out control issues was proving very complex, the same issue that scuttled past merger talks between CNN and Viacom Inc.-owned CBS News.

Those concerns aren't likely to change with Turner out of the picture. There are also worries that the deal won't save both companies the kind of money that has been predicted—up to $200 million in some reports, said Ken Auletta, media writer for The New Yorker magazine who is working on a book about Turner.

"CNN and ABC is a very difficult deal to put together," said Christopher Dixon, an analyst for UBS Warburg. "Although it makes sense on paper, there are some significant cultural differences. We still live in a world where it is difficult for farmers and cowboys to be friends."

An executive with knowledge of the talks, who spoke upon the condition of anonymity, said it's simply too early to say what difference Turner's exit will mean.

Turner is "apoplectic" about what has happened to CNN, said Porter Bibb, an analyst for Technology Partners and another Turner biographer. Turner built a network with an unglamorous focus on news and, in the past few years, CNN has tried jazzy promotions of personalities like Connie Chung, Aaron Brown and Paula Zahn.

But CNN has lost its ratings pre-eminence to Fox News Channel, and the gap between the two is widening.

In an interview for "60 Minutes II" to be broadcast on CBS next week, Turner conceded it was hard not to have a role in CNN. He was diplomatic when asked what he thought of the network's direction.

"I think basically that CNN is doing a pretty good job," Turner told CBS newsman Mike Wallace. "I mean, there are some things, obviously, that I don't like ..."

Auletta, said his immediate thought after Wednesday's announcement was that Turner might try to reacquire CNN. But he concluded it was unlikely.

Turner, who told Wallace he has lost between $7 billion and $8 billion because of the tumbling AOL Time Warner stock, may no longer have the resources to buy back his creation, he said. Turner also has extensive philanthropic commitments, including a $1-billion donation to United Nations causes.

Insurance body asked to ease licensing process

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE PHILIPPINE Life Insurance Association has asked the Insurance Commission to encourage the growth of the life insurance industry by facilitating an easier licensing process for agents.

In a speech on Wednesday, new PLIA president Jose Cuisia said his group suggested that existing licenses for life insurance agents be renewed every three or five years or, better yet, that the certificates remain in force continuously unless revoked for cause.

"Surely such considerations will vastly streamline the administration of agents licensing as well as attract more potential agents into our industry. The more agents we have the more we will be able to reach out to all market sectors of our society," Cuisia said.

Cuisia, president and chief executive of the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co., the country's largest life insurance firm, pointed out that despite the large number of certificates of authority issued by the Insurance Commission every year, the life insurance industry's agency force had not grown substantially.

He attributed this to agent fallout, particularly from the new batches of licensed agents.

RP's infotech grads still Asia's laggards; poor training blamed

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY'S information technology graduates are still trailing most of their counterparts in other parts of Asia, as they often still need additional training even after years of studying here.

Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development (PCASTRD) executive director Ida Dalmacio said the Philippines' pool of IT workers currently ranked way below those in Malaysia and Singapore.

Dalmacio said other countries would soon catch up with the Philippines, leaving it at the bottom rung of the IT ladder, if nothing concrete would be done now.

"We used to be in the lead, but now we're lagging way behind. We need to get back to where we were before," she said during the presentation of a report on the state of Philippine IT manpower by local e-commerce think-tank Digital Filipino.

The Digital Filipino report said some local IT schools were producing inadequately trained graduates because of equally ill-trained teachers, "just to maintain profitability."

"Many hire their fresh graduates as teachers for the next batch of students even though they need to have actual experience," the report said. "Some companies blacklisted applications from several schools due to their lack of technical and communications skills."

The report also stated that the English proficiency of local IT graduates had deteriorated because of the use of less English and more Filipino in teaching subjects in schools.

Both Dalmacio and Digital Filipino, however, were confident that the Philippines still had the potential to regain its leadership status in the region with a few concrete steps that both the government and the private sector could initiate.

One of these is the PCASTRD's scholarship program for students engaged in masters and doctorate degree studies on science-related courses.

Since 1989, the agency has been giving scholarships to deserving students engaged in different fields of science. Among these fields is IT.

Dalmacio said more than 30 of PCASTRD's 207 scholars now were enrolled in computer science degree programs.

While PCASTRD scholars could always go abroad in search of greener pastures, she was proud to say that almost all of them opt to stay in the Philippines and use their knowledge here.

Guimaras begins mango export season

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Guimaras is beginning another mango export season this month with hopes of getting a bigger slice of the US market.

Guimaras is the only Philippine province that the US Department of Agriculture has allowed to export mangoes to the United States.

The island went through a "reverse quarantine" in 1992 that sealed it off from pests like the oriental fruitfly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*) and mango seed weevil (*Sternochetus mangiferae*).

Last year's first shipment was only about 90 metric tons, but it was enough to stimulate demand among local exporters and Filipino communities in the United States.

This year, Guimaras intends to increase its shipment by at least 20 percent.

In an interview, Leah Gella, chief of plant quarantine service of the Department of Agriculture in Western Visayas, said a Manila-based mango exporter tried to start early with a shipment of 2.1 metric tons of mangoes in January.

The USDA and the Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) held the shipment, citing the need to "re-certify" the vapor heat treatment (VHT) plant at Food Terminal Inc. in Taguig, Rizal.

VHT, which rids mangoes of fruit flies, is an acceptable phytosanitary measure to importing countries like Japan, Taiwan, Australia and the United States.

The re-certification is needed before the export season can begin, said Perfecto Corpuz, an agricultural specialist of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service at the US embassy in Manila.

He said APHIS personnel were now checking the VHT plant.

The move, which include calibrating the VHT plant, is part of the protocol, according to local agriculture officials.

The re-certification process is expected to be completed in the first week of February.

To prepare for the second year of its export season, Guimaras has formed the Federation of Guimaras Mango Growers Association.

By being members of the association, small mango farmers may avail of the latest information on production and export market, as well as the use of the newly built P6-million packing house, complete with water treatment facilities, crates and sorting tables.

Special agri economic zone to rise in Isabela

CAUAYAN CITY—The House committee on economic affairs has endorsed the setting up of a 200-hectare Isabela Special Agro-Industrial Economic Zone at the Monterey Farms in Barangay San Luis here.

The committee, chaired by Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno, approved House Bill No. 2893 after a public hearing here on Thursday.

Moreno and committee members, Representatives Sulpicio Roco Jr. (Camarines Sur) and Gilbert Remulla (Cavite), and other local officials inspected the proposed site for the economic zone before the public hearing.

The bill was authored by Isabela Reps. Rodolfo Albano Jr., Faustino Dy III, Edwin Uy and Antonio Abaya.

Moreno, in approving the bill at the committee level, said the inclusion of private investors in running the economic zone would help the area's development.

The Monterey Farms, a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp., is a 40-minute drive from the city proper.

The zone, according to the Cagayan Valley development plan, will serve as one of the major investment areas for agriculture and fishery industries.

The area will also be developed into an industrial tree plantation and a maritime hub in Northern Luzon.

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LRA: PROTECTING THE LANDOWNER AND HELPING THE ECONOMY THROUGH HONEST PROMPT AND PROGRESSIVE LAND TITLING

TITLES AT YOUR DOORSTEPS

Today we celebrate the 100th founding anniversary of the Land Registration Authority (LRA). Having evolved from a judicial body with limited jurisdiction in 1903 to the national agency attached to the Department of Justice with quasi-judicial and ministerial functions that it is today, the LRA stands in the forefront of the government's efforts to provide the public with prompt, efficient and reliable service.

MESSAGES

I extend my cordial greetings to the men and women of the **Land Registration Authority** (LRA) on your ***Centennial Foundation Anniversary.***

I commend you for your 100 years of continued dedication in improving the delivery of services to the Filipino people. Your commitment to provide a secure, stable and trustworthy record of land ownership for our people bolster our national effort to promote the social and economic well-being of our citezenry.

This event brings to fore the vital role that the LRA plays in the implementation of the Agrarian reform Program of the government and in the development of our society. We need to join hands to achieve better results for the welfare of our people and to reinforce our commitment to the vision of a strong Philippine Republic.
More power and *Mabuhay*!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

The privilege of celebrating the 100th Year Anniversary of the Land Registration Authority as the incumbent Administrator is for me a rare and distinct honor, which I am proud to share with my fellow workers and my family.

As the agency commemorates its founding year a century ago, I wish to take this momentous occasion to thank our beloved President, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, for her continued support to the agency's program to streamline its work processes, as well as its crusade against graft, in line with her call to the nation to eliminate bureaucratic red tape and corruption.

In recognition of the agency's deserving public servants, I commend them for their honesty, industry, competence, loyalty and dedication to their duty to protect and uphold the rights of the people over their properties through their continuing efforts to ensure a clean, efficient and trustworthy record of Land Registration.

For those who fail to measure up to the required degree of honesty and industry, that I shall promptly take appropriate action to instill discipline in order to improve the image and integrity of the agency.

I am pleased to report that the Authority had embarked on the modernization of the outmoded system of land registration with the launching of a Land Titling Computerization Project' which would expedite the delivery of services to the public, eliminate graft and eventually eradicate fraud in the registration system.

In closing, I assure the Filipino people that the Land registration Authority is a responsible office dedicated to continue providing them with efficient service as its contribution to the progress of the country.

Happy Centennial Anniversary to all!

Benedicto B. Ulep
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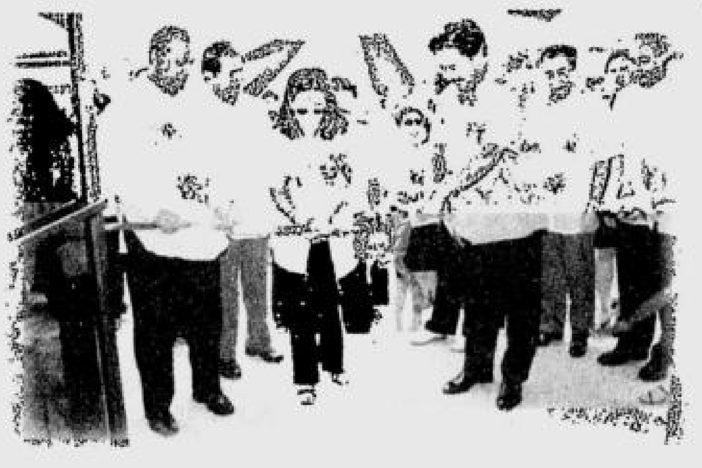
Administrator, LRA

LAND REGISTRATION CONSCIOUSNESS WEEK
LRA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
Schedule of Activities
(Central Office & NCR RDs)

DATE	ACTIVITIES		IN-CHARGE
January 26 (Sunday)	*6:00-6:30 a.m.	Assembly at LRA Ground	
	*6:30 a.m.	ABS-CBN Studio 4	
	*7:00-8:00 a.m.	Mass (ABS-CBN) & LRA grounds	- Enrg. Ambrosio Santos
	*8:00-8:30 a.m.	Break-assembly at LRA Grounds	
	*8:30 a.m.	Motorcade	- Mr. Norberto B. Orense
	*2:00 p.m.	Fun Games	- Sports Committee/LRAEA
January 27 (Monday)	*8:00 a.m.	Flag Ceremony Opening of Mini Olympics	
	*11:00 a.m.	Opening of Centennial Exhibit (Upper Ground Floor) Launching of Homepage	- Ms. Cynthia T. Ignacio/ - Ms. Jane Ysmael
	*12:00 noon	Lunch/Fellowship with Past Administrators and Deputy Administrators	
	*2:00 p.m.	Symposium/Dialogues on Land Registration	- NCR-RDS/DRDs RD QC
January 28 (Tuesday0	*8:00-5:00	Free Legal Advice to the Public	- Atty. Josefina Montaner - Atty. Artemio Legaspi
	*3:00 p.m.	Search for Mr. & Ms. LRA Centennial	- Atty. Regina M. Medalla
January 30 (Thursday)	*7:30 a.m.	LRA grounds Tree Planting Championship games	- Atty. Regina Medalla
January 31 (Friday)	*8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Free medical/dental mission	- Dr. Domingo Valdepenas - Dra. Cleotilde Salinas
February 01 (Saturday)	*4:30 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.	Fun run	- Sports Committee/LRAEA
	*7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Centennial Mass - LRA grounds	- Engr. Ambrosio Santos
	*8:30 a.m.	PHILARIS system demonstration	
	*9:15 a.m.	Program proper/Awarding	- Dr. Rosalinda Alonzo/ - Atty. Lorato Orense
	P.M.	Fellowship	- LRAEA & [illegible]

Being the centenary of the LRA, we find the theme *"100 Taong Paglilingkod ng LRA sa Sambayanang Pilipino para sa Matatag na Titulo"* truly befitting for it sums up what the authority has been doing for the Filipino people since its initial creation as a Court of Land Registration. It has served not only the interests of the landowner but, more importantly, of the general populace as well. By functioning as the central repository of records relative to original registration of lands titled under the Torrens system, including subdivision and consolidation plans, the LRA plays a major role in the conservation and preservation of our patrimony. "It protects the vital national resource that is land from malicious individuals and criminal syndicates who, in their despicable desire to earn quick money at the expense of the legitimate landowners and the unsuspecting public, greatly undermine the integrity and trustworthiness of land registration in our country.

To mark this historic and momentous occasion, the LR'A chose to commemorate its 100th year as a key agency in the government's program for social and economic growth by featuring both its times past and its future direction. The observance itself covers one week, beginning January 26 to culminate on February 1; but it is an occasion that will be held in the spirit of austerity that all government offices are encouraged to espouse during these trying times.



...eficiaries by:
...MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

...SIGNING OF TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE GRANT
BY THE US GOVERNMENT TO THE
LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
BALAGTAS ROOM, THE PENINSULA MANILA
FEBRUARY 27, 1998, 3:00 P.M.

The LRA has steadfastly fought against fake land titling and has lobbied for the amendment of the laws to the end that such serious offenses be deemed a heinous crime. It has unwaveringly worked for the economic alleviation of tenant farmers by working with the Department of Agrarian Reform and established, in line with endeavor, the LRA-CARP to help in the distribution of Certificates of Land Ownership Awards to deserving farmer beneficiaries.

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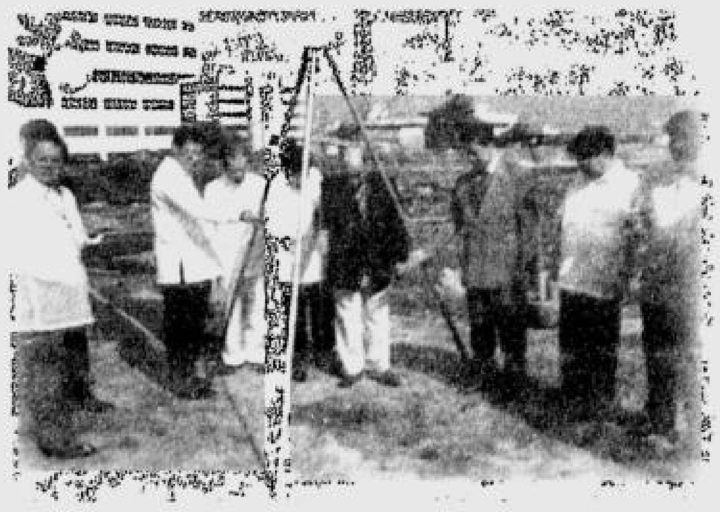
Aside from its role of protector, the LRA is an income-generating agency, assisting the BIR in the collection of land-related taxes.

With a consummate sense of professional dedication, the men and women of the LRA have worked tirelessly to preserve the integrity of the country's land titling system.

With the rise of the Information Age, the Authority recognized that it had the greatest chance to eradicate forever the threat of fake titling and to evolve its systems to cater to the demands of a vastly and intermittently changing world. Thus, it initiated the ambitious Land Titling Computerization Project, which would expedite the delivery of services to the public at an astonishingly quick pace, eliminate graft and eventually eradicate fraud in the registration system.

On February 1, the LRA is set to unveil the crown in its modernization bid, the PHILARIS, a computerized system. With PHILARIS in place, the Authority shall firmly and finally close the doors to land-related crimes and open new doors of public confidence.



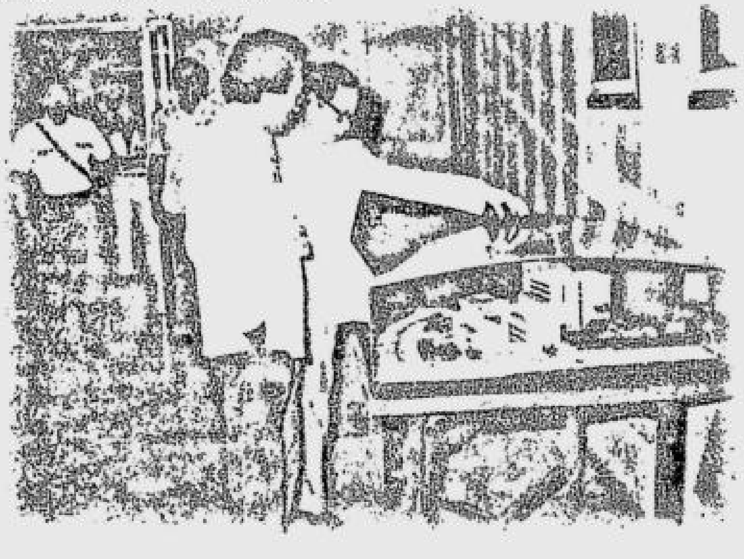
Contract Signing
LRA & Land Registration Systems, Inc.
May

ADVT.

LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

100th Anniversary

LRA: PROTECTING THE LANDOWNER AND HELPING THE ECONOMY THROUGH HONEST PROMPT AND PROGRESSIVE LAND TITLING



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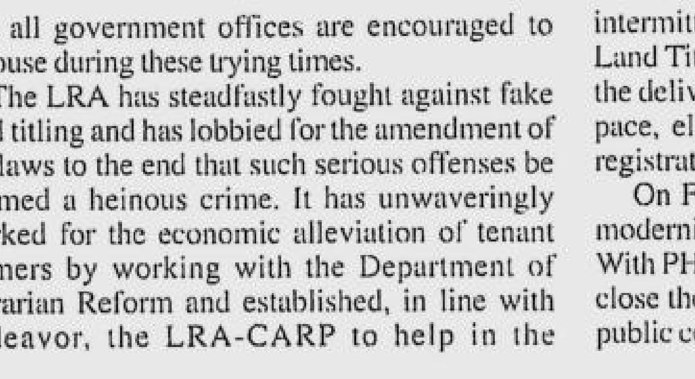

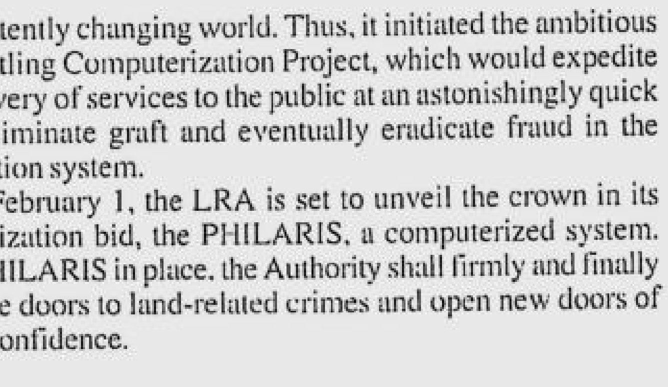
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LRA & Land Registration Systems, Inc.

ADVT.

LAND TITLING COMPUTERIZATION PROJECT

Crucial to ensuring the integrity of land titles and better efficiency in the delivery of service

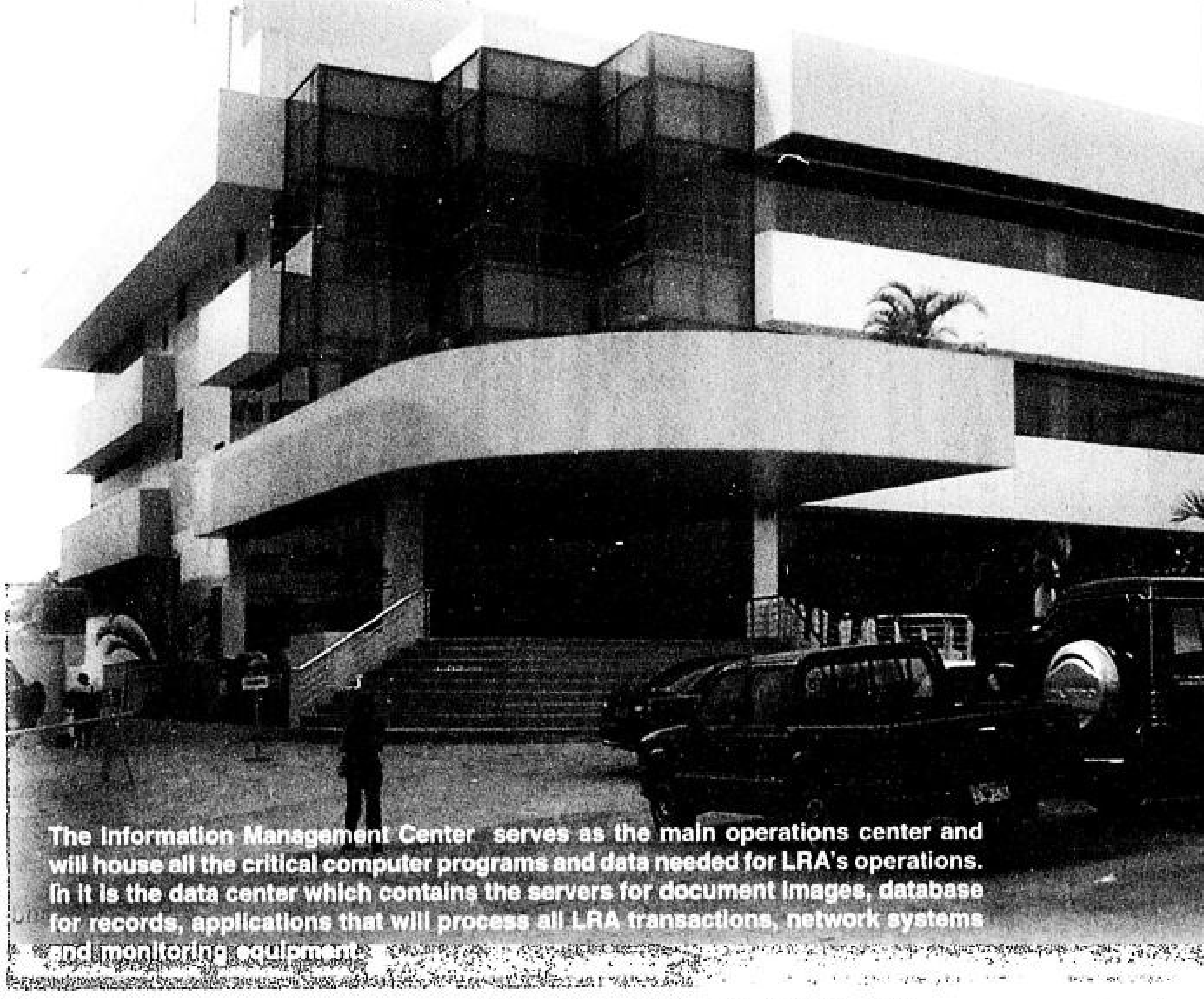
The rampant debasing of the country's land titling system makes it imperative for the Land Registration Authority (LRA) to undertake the Land Titling Computerization Project (LTCP) in order to restore confidence in the country's registry and titling systems and raise its level of service to the public.

In line with its mission and its Centennial slogan ***"100 Taong Paglilingkod ng LRA sa Sambayanang Pilipino – para sa Matatag na Titulo,"*** the LRA leadership is aggressively pursuing its LTCP dubbed as the "Philippine Land Registration and Information System" or PHILARIS.

Together with its project partner, the Land Registration Systems, Inc. (LARES) and its associates, LG CNS Philippines, Inc. and F. F. Cruz, Inc., LRA affirms its commitment towards the preservation of the Torrens system and the efficiency of deeds registration. To prove this, LRA and LARES have already constructed the Project's Information Management Center (IMC) and the new Registry of Deeds of Quezon City, both located at LRA compound on East Avenue, Quezon City.

The Goals of the Land Titling Computerization Project (LTCP)

- To implement a fast and reliable process of registration of lands through nationwide integrated computerization.
- To automate the land titling processes that will ensure the integrity of land titles, efficient service delivery, accurate land information, preservation of land records and new client/customer services and products.
- To link all levels of the LRA with the Central Office (CO), 16 Regional Registries of Deeds and 162 Registries of Deeds.
- To provide other sectors access to historical data and other knowledge bases for land titling and registration in various information formats for decision-making.



The Information Management Center serves as the main operations center and will house all the critical computer programs and data needed for LRA's operations. In it is the data center which contains the servers for document images, database for records, applications that will process all LRA transactions, network systems and monitoring equipment.

The newly-constructed Quezon City Registry of Deeds is the first Registry of Deeds that will implement the new computerized system.

PHILARIS: ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES AND SYSTEMS

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have matured to the point where these have now become practical, cost effective, and necessary to apply in addressing the goals of the LTCP. For this purpose, state-of-the-art computer systems and telecommunications technologies are adopted and incorporated into the PHILARIS. The application of Business Process Re-engineering, Change Management and Automated Workflow; Internet Access; Digital Mapping; Comprehensive Regional Database; Document Imaging; CD ROM and Optical Disk-based Archiving and Validating systems; and Full Network Connectivity, allows PHILARIS to achieve the following:

- ➢ Secure tighter control over land titles and eliminate fraudulent titles by shifting from a paper-based operation to a paperless system.
- ➢ Facilitate the apprehension and prosecution of persons possessing or dealing in spurious land titles by developing a system of identifying and tracking titles between the LRA Central Office and the Registries of Deeds that is able to verify authenticity of claims, title, records and documents anytime, from anywhere,
- ➢ Eliminate fraudulent and inaccurate surveys by using modern digital mapping technologies to create accurate Municipal Index Sheets and update them with parcel boundaries and ownership information.
- ➢ Make available to the public an Internet access to all land titling information from the LRA Central Office and all Registry offices.
- ➢ Protect land title information from loss due to fire, theft, natural disasters and the normal ravages of time by using secured document imaging technology.
- ➢ Expedite land titling procedures through a nationwide networking of all Registries and the LRA Central office, and by storing land title related documents as digital images in a commonly accessible, searchable database.

PHILARIS will allow a more orderly flow of transaction process in the QC-RD.

State-of-the art I.T. equipment that will be in operation.

THE LRA-LARES SYNERGY

The LRA-LARES partnership has provided the vision and the political will to provide world-class service for the Filipino landowner through the LTCP. The public is expected to benefit from the project where every transaction will be recorded in the computer system database and unscrupulous persons will have a hard time tampering records, thus becoming a disincentive for those who are contemplating to commit land titling crimes. With this, accountability and transparency are enhanced and anomalies are prevented. The project will result in better service to the public.

The synergy in the LRA-LARES partnership in streamlining the land titling operations gives the LTCP the opportunity to contribute to the poverty alleviation and economic development programs of the government. Studies show that it is the poorer section of society that bear the costs of a dysfunctional land administration system and the informal transactions associated with it. Along with the BOT Law and the proven enabling technologies, the LRA-LARES synergy also serves as a model for public-private undertakings that can help restore investor confidence and attract more investments to boost the country's economic development in the 21st Century.

THE PROJECT COMPANY

The Land Registration Systems, Inc. (LARES) is the project company formed by the consortium that was awarded the contract for LTCP under a Build-Own-Operate (BOO) arrangement, as provided by Republic Act 1778 and its Implementing Rules & Regulations. As such, the LTCP is being implemented at no cost to the government. It is wholly funded by the private proponents without any government guarantee.

LARES is composed of Strategic Alliance Development Corporation (STRADEC), Unisys, Comfac Corporation; and F.F. Cruz & Co., Inc..

LG CNS Philippines, Inc., is LTCP's systems integrator and project manager. It ensures the full integration and seamless interfacing of all the technical components of the project with each other. It also ensures that the project is delivered on time, within budget.

F.F. Cruz, Inc. undertakes data conversion, site preparation and facilities development, and the Geographic Information System (GIS) that uses the digital map as a basic map for providing land information.

LRA Mission: *To issue decrees of registration and certificates of title and register documents, patents and other land transactions for the benefit of landowners, Agrarian Reform beneficiaries and the registering public in general; and to provide a secure, stable and trustworthy record of land ownership and recorded interest therein so as to promote social and economic well-being and contribute to national development.*

STRADEC | COMFAC CORPORATION | LG-CNS | F.F. CRUZ & CO., INC. | SYBASE® | UNISYS

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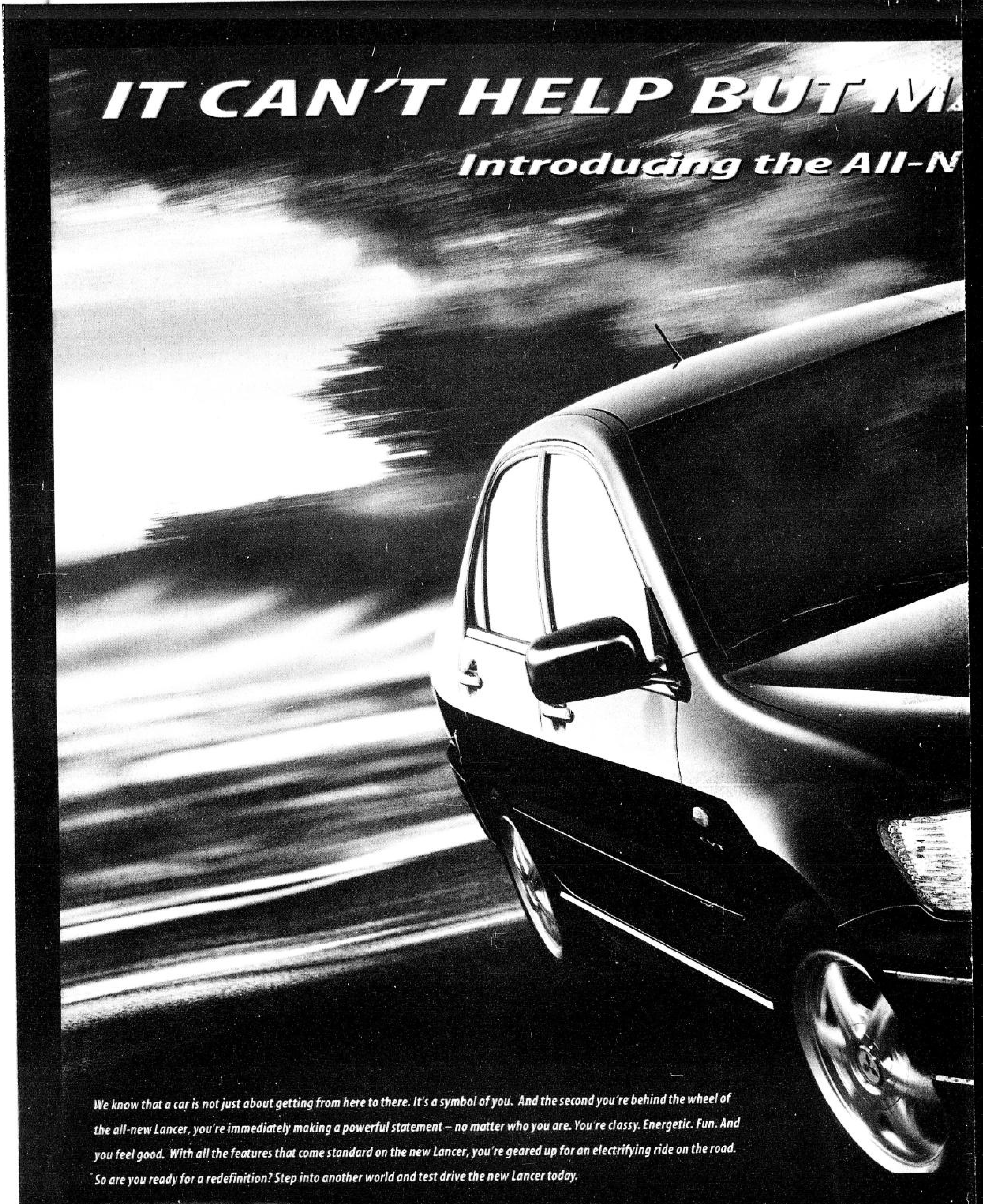

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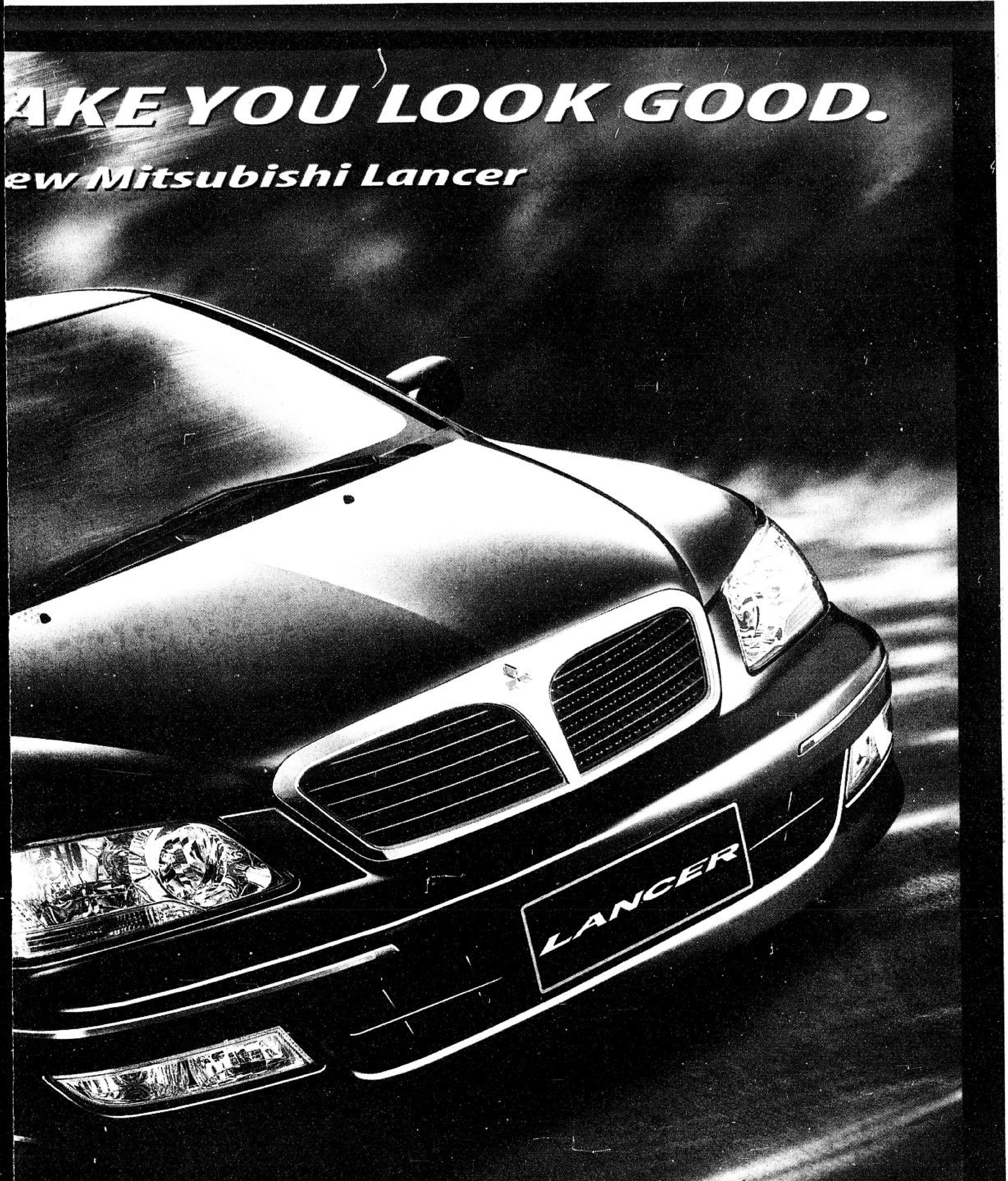
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Too much, too little sleep linked to heart disease in women

CHICAGO—Women who don't get enough sleep and those who sleep too much may both run a greater risk of getting heart disease than those who log eight hours a day, according to a report published last Monday.

Why too much sleep would lead to coronary heart disease is unclear, the report said. Previous studies have shown that sleep deprivation can result in increased blood pressure, heart rate variability, decreased glucose tolerance and increased cortisol levels.

Researchers who studied data on more than 71,000 women over a 10-year period reported that those who got five hours or less of sleep each night were 45 percent more likely to develop narrowed coronary arteries than a control group that got a solid eight hours of repose.

Those who averaged six hours of shut-eye a night had an 18 percent higher risk compared to the control group. Those who got a regular seven hours of down-time were 9 percent more likely to develop heart disease than the controls.

Conversely—and somewhat to the researchers' surprise—women who averaged nine to 11 hours of sleep were at 38 percent higher risk for the disease, according to the researchers at Boston Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Coronary heart disease, caused by the narrowing of the coronary arteries and a common catalyst for heart attacks, is greatly influenced by a variety of lifestyle choices such as exercise, smoking and diet.

This new study suggests that sleep may weigh into that equation, too, the Boston researchers said.

"This research sends an important message to a population that is spending more and more time working and staying up late watching television or using the Internet. Adequate daily sleep should not be considered a luxury, but an important component of a healthy lifestyle," said lead author and sleep specialist Najib Ayas.

The study appeared in the current issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

AFP, Reuters

Prevent heart ailment right at your home

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE PHILIPPINES may not be a highly developed country, but it is troubled by a health problem that is very common in developed nations—heart disease.

Heart disease used to be associated only with rich countries (and rich people), but not anymore. In our country, in fact, it is a growing problem.

Latest data from the Department of Health (1998), show that heart disease was the leading cause of death in the country, followed by diseases of the vascular system. Diabetes, a risk factor for heart disease, ranked eighth.

That year, the DOH recorded 55,830 deaths due to heart disease alone; this accounted for 16 percent of the total deaths that year. Most of the cases were males (58 percent).

Family as heart guardian

But heart disease is a highly preventable disease, and its prevention can start right in the home.

Dr. Ramon F. Abarquez, a cardiologist and professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, says Filipinos should take advantage of their close family ties in preventing heart disease.

If someone is into "SEX-HDL" (which stands for smoking, eating or overeating, lack of exercise, high blood pressure, diabetes, lipidemia or fat), the rest of the family should be reexamined or reevaluated because this condition most likely runs in the entire family.

He noted that most Filipino families eat together and this tradition should be turned into an opportunity to discuss healthy habits.

"If the father is overweight, how can he encourage his family members to improve their eating habits?" Abarquez said.

Aside from the family, loving someone—and having someone love you—helps you keep a healthy heart.

This has been proven by countless research, including one by Yale University experts 15 years ago which showed that people who felt most loved and supported had less obstruction of the arteries than those who felt less loved. The study was based on the coronary angiography (an X-ray of the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart) of 119 men and 40 women.

There have also been studies, some dating from as far back as 1897, which show that a person with a network of friends and a loving relationship with others has a lower risk of dying from heart disease, cancer and infections compared to those who are socially isolated.

Among the main risk factors for ischemic heart disease and stroke are smoking, lipid disorders, high blood pressure, diabetes, a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, stress and unhealthy eating habits.

You can add philandering to that list.

Abarquez said a Scandinavian study indicated that persons involved in illicit love affairs are more prone to heart attacks.

"Making love to somebody (other than) your legitimate partner is a stressful situation," he said. "If you are already at risk—if you are a smoker, have high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol—you should watch out and be careful of an illicit affair. You are at a higher risk because of the stress caused by the affair."

10 Leading Causes of Mortality in RP, 1998

CAUSE	Male	Female	Total No.	% Total Deaths
1. Diseases of the heart	32,260	23,570	55,830	15.8
2. Diseases of the vascular system	23,712	17,668	41,380	11.7
3. Pneumonia	17,632	16,077	33,709	9.5
4. Malignant Neoplasm	17,457	14,633	32,090	9.1
5. Accidents	24,160	5,714	29,874	8.5
6. Tuberculosis	18,874	9,167	28,041	7.9
7. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	9,459	4,769	14,228	4.0
8. Diabetes	4,262	4,557	8,819	2.5
9. Other respiratory system diseases	3,780	3,736	7,516	2.1
10. Nephritis, nephrosis	4,417	3,036	7,453	2.1

SOURCE: DOH

Docs warn computer overuse can cause fatal blood clot

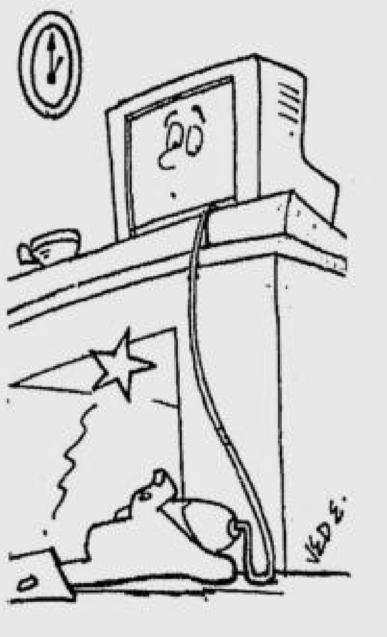

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

DOCTORS say that sitting for long hours before a computer terminal may have the same effect as taking a long-haul flight in cramped seating—it could cause a fatal blood clot.

In a research published in the latest issue of the European Respiratory Journal, New Zealand researchers reported the case of a 32-year-old man who used to sit immobile at his computer screen, at work and at home, for 12 hours a day, and on occasions for up to 18 hours.

The man first suffered a swollen calf, whose pain subsided after 10 days. But in the ensuing weeks, he became increasingly breathless when he exerted himself, and then one day he just lost consciousness.

The cause was a massive blood clot that had formed in his leg veins, broke off and traveled to his lungs—a potentially fatal deep vein thrombosis (DVT) identical to that notoriously suffered by travelers on long flights.

"(The patient) would typically sit for one to two hours, and not infrequently as many as six, without standing up from his work station," say the authors led by Richard Beasley of the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand.

"This is the first reported case of an association between repeated prolonged immobility sitting at a computer and life-threatening (lung embolism)," they wrote.

They suggested the condition be called "e-thrombosis."

Recently, DVT has emerged as a potential, although very remote, risk for travelers on long, intercontinental flights.

It has been dubbed "economy class syndrome" because the phenomenon occurs more frequently among passengers in cramped seating, although researchers say it can occur in any seating where passengers are immobile.

DVT occurs when the flow of blood is restricted in a vein and a clot forms. It can also be caused by poor circulation because of problems such as heart disease, a recent heart attack or stroke, varicose veins, or from inactivity or prolonged bed rest.

Pregnant women, people who are overweight, the elderly, smokers and people with coronary heart disease and certain blood conditions are considered to be most at risk.

To prevent it, doctors suggest flexing one's toes and ankles, drinking water and avoiding alcohol, and getting up to stretch one's legs at least once an hour. Taking aspirin, which can thin the blood, can also help.

AFP

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Babies fed too much sleep badly at night

PARIS—Parents who feed their newborn baby too frequently pay for it at night, for the child is likely to sleep badly, according to a study published in the Archives of Disease in Childhood.

A study on 600 healthy British babies found that newborns who had been fed more than 11 times during 24 hours in their first week of life were nearly three times as likely to have disrupted nighttime sleep three months later.

But help is at hand.

The researchers found that by using this simple three-step behavioral program, parents could train a newborn to sleep through the night—and even "at risk" babies who had been fed too often benefited from it, too:

3-step program

Step 1: Darken rooms and make less noise in the home at night so that the newborn associates that time with sleeping. This part of the program entails maximizing the difference between daytime and nighttime environments.

Step 2: When the baby is sleepy at nighttime, place him in his bed or cot without cuddling or feeding.

Step 3: When the baby is 3 weeks old, healthy and is putting on weight normally, parents must gradually begin to delay feeding when he wakes up at night. Change the baby's nappies, for example, before offering breast or bottled milk. This way, the baby does not associate waking up with the pleasure of a feed, and so is likelier to settle down and go back to sleep.

The three-step program enabled 82 percent of "at risk" babies to sleep through the night. The rate was only 62 percent among "at risk" babies who were in a control group in which there was no program.

Gentler on kids

The authors, led by Ian St. James-Roberts of the University of London, say their program stands a good chance of being adopted by parents because it is gentler than tougher initiatives that let babies with chronic sleeping problems cry themselves to sleep.

A study last year by the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia found that women who could steel themselves to use the "cry baby" technique ended up healthier and happy and less prone to post-natal depression.

Infant sleep problems have a widely recorded effect on family health. They are identified as a cause of marital stress, family breakdown, child abuse and child behavior problems.

AFP

It's not magic; it's science!

DISCOVER

Massie K. Santos

TODAY'S column is brought to you by the makers of human pheromone candles and cologne the world over. I came across some during a recent shopping expedition and felt compelled to learn more about them.

Anyone who has come across these items will not be a stranger to the following sales pitch:

Human pheromones known as androstenol and androstenone directly affect the vomeronasal organ (VNO), located a few inches inside the nasal cavity. Since its discovery just a few years ago, scientific studies have proven that androstenone relaxes women, which makes men think they're even sexier than before, and increases men's libido. What are you waiting for? Order now!

When I first looked up human pheromone candles I thought the whole thing was a really tacky infomercial.

Sure, women who are relaxed tend to be easier to talk to and hit on, but I'm not sure it's guaranteed to win women dates.

Studies done

I looked it up and found out that several studies have been done on androstenol and the vomeronasal organ, but all the facts on the sellers' websites have either been deliberately twisted or badly misunderstood.

Point 1: Androstenol and androstenone aren't pheromones; they're steroids.

Pheromones are defined as odors that send messages between members of a species, which androstenol and androstenone can't do because they're odorless and because there are no receptors for receiving the messages they send in humans.

But not everyone agrees with the definition so they're still being classified as pheromones for the time being.

Point 2: While some scientists have taken photos of the VNO in fetuses and in adults, there are arguments over whether or not all the photos correctly identify it. That's partly because the VNO exists in only one side of the nose, so maybe some people are taking pictures of the wrong nostril, and partly because people have been mistaking other structures in the nose for the VNO.

Research on animals

Point 3: Research on androstenol and the VNO goes back to the 1970s (at the very least when I looked them up), which means this isn't exactly breaking news. The problem is that most pheromone and VNO research had been done on animals—and a lot of animals, like rats, pigs and so on, respond dramatically to androstenone and androstenol.

So while the studies have shown that these mammalian pheromones do work, the results in human trials aren't quite as definitive.

One trial had either pheromone applied on the person's upper lip instead of inside the VNO, which meant that there was no way to know for certain if these pheromones were working with the VNO, or if they were really steroids being absorbed into the skin.

In short, the candles will smell nice and burn brightly, but don't expect anything more.

Breathing bugs

Also falling under the category of non-magical discoveries is the recent news that bugs (ants, beetles, crickets, etc.) really do (gasp!) breathe.

This subject has apparently been under debate for a very long time, dating back to Aristotle in fact. It seems that the Greek philosopher believed that air just sort of passed in and out of bugs (think osmosis or a lecture from a parent or teacher that goes in one ear and straight out the other).

His belief was so strong, it actually divided the scientific community. Some scientists agreed with Aristotle; others didn't, but didn't have the proof to argue against it.

Then along came Wah-Keat Lee and his colleagues at the Advanced Photon Source at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois. They were physicists working on a totally unrelated project and they happened to be using the most powerful X-ray machine ever—one that can see structures 100 times smaller than those that normal X-rays can detect.

One day, these physicists saw a dead bug, saw the X-ray, and a light went on in their heads. So they powered up the X-ray machine, and to their utter amazement they saw lung-like structures in the insect carcass.

Now the scientific community is proud to announce that it unanimously agreed that bugs do, in fact, breathe.

Isn't science wonderful?

Banana ketchup lives

On a side note, I have to thank Marivic Tiongson and the wonderful people at Heinz-UFC, who responded to last week's column and took time to personally reassure me that they were working on ensuring that banana ketchup (and bananas too!) "will be around in 2015 and beyond."

I have complete faith that they'll live up to their word.

And congratulations to Myla for the most creative response to last week's article.

Scientists back celebrity protein diet

CANBERRA—The latest high-protein Hollywood diet that has helped shape actress Jennifer Aniston and former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell has won the approval of Australian scientists over conventional diets.

A study by Australia's key scientific research group, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), found the controversial diet prompted faster weight loss than traditional diets high in carbohydrates.

"The high-protein, low-fat diet is an effective and perfectly valid and safe weight loss alternative," CSIRO senior research dietician Dr. Manny Noakes said in a statement seen by Reuters last Thursday.

In the CSIRO study, women on the high protein diet ate 200 grams of lean red meat in the evening and 100 grams of chicken or fish at lunchtime as well as low-fat dairy products. The diet included some carbohydrates such as fruit and bread.

Noakes said that aside from faster weight loss, participants in the CSIRO study found it easier to stick to protein-rich foods like lean red meat because it left them feeling more satisfied and less hungry.

Reuters

Doctors unite in fight against atherosclerosis

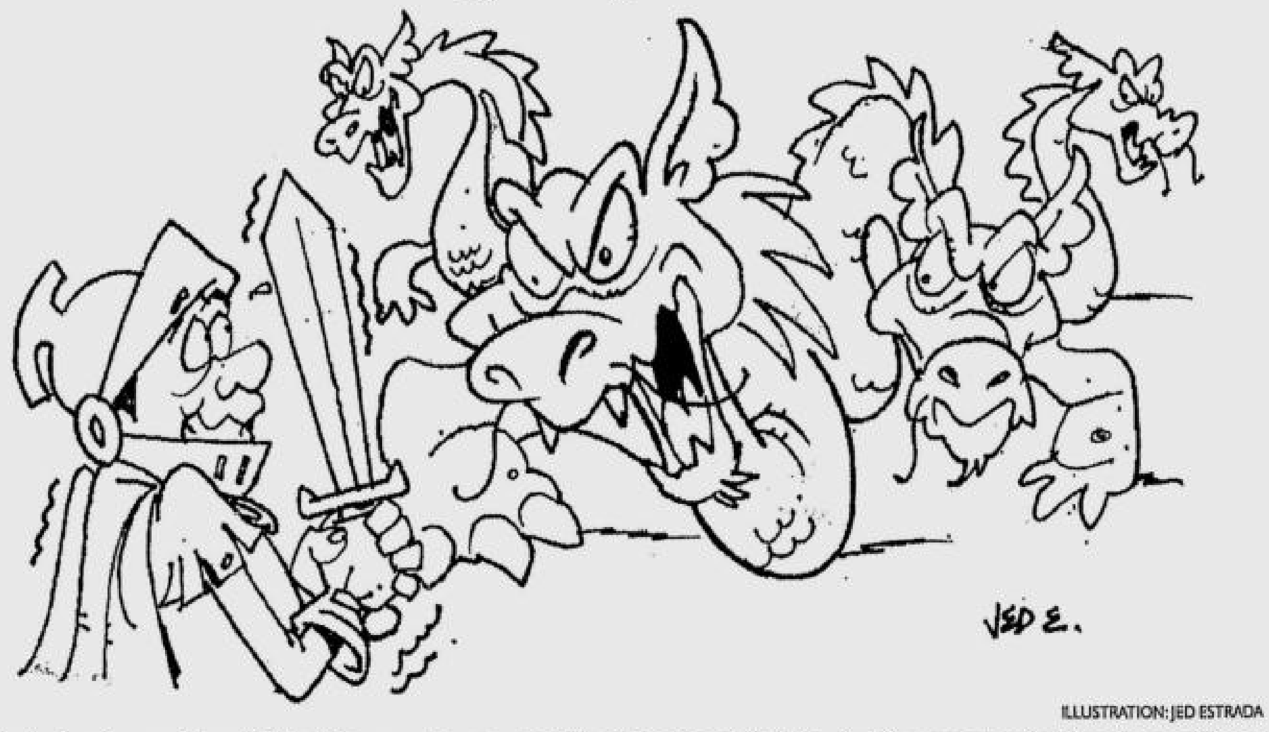

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

IF I remember correctly, it was Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit who once likened atherosclerosis, or the narrowing of the arteries, to a multiheaded dragon that is too formidable for a gallant knight to slay, no matter how extraordinary his valor and skills are.

The dragon's multiple heads are the various risk factors, particularly high blood pressure (BP), cholesterol, diabetes, smoking and obesity.

The fact that atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases have gone up the list in the last two decades to become the leading causes of deaths in the Philippines and worldwide suggests there was something wrong in the general strategy used by doctors and health care givers in addressing the problem.

Global risk assessment

Patients used to be treated on a piecemeal basis. High blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and obesity were managed separately.

But doctors soon realized that treating only one risk factor and neglecting others or treating several but leaving one major risk factor uncontrolled might not reduce heart attack, stroke and peripheral arterial disease.

Today, doctors are advised to make a comprehensive or thorough assessment of the patient to identify those at high risk. This is called a global risk assessment, and it guides the physician on what medicines to prescribe.

For example, a patient who has a high-normal BP of 130/88 should already be started on treatment if he has diabetes or if protein (albumin) is detected in the urine. He is already considered high-risk compared to another person who might have a higher BP of 150/100 but with no other risk factors. This other patient is still considered low-risk.

Blood vessel damage

A common denominator of most cardiovascular diseases and risk factors is the damage they inflict on the blood vessels. The narrowing of the arteries impairs the circulation in vital organs like the heart, brain and kidneys.

The initial deprivation of oxygen and nutrients is called ischemia, and when this is sustained it leads to an infarction, or death of the tissues, such as in a heart attack or stroke.

Treatment today is focused on improving the health and function of the blood vessels, no matter what the primary problem is.

Patients might be surprised when they're prescribed an antihypertensive agent although their BP is normal, or a cholesterol-lowering drug although their blood cholesterol is still within normal limits.

Alliance formed

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases require a concerted multispecialty approach to lick the problem. It is important for all specialists from various fields to convene regularly and compare data and insights on how best to cut the many heads of the atherosclerotic dragon.

The Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Lipid Society (PLS) are leading 24 medical and health care organizations in an alliance against atherosclerosis.

The alliance is organizing a convention from Feb. 10-12 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel with more than a thousand delegates expected to participate. (Interested health care professionals may contact 631-7970.)

"We hope everyone who will attend this convention will go home not only with new knowledge and insights into the prevention and control of atherosclerosis, but more importantly with a firmer commitment in achieving this goal," said PSH presiden\t Dr. Gregorio Patacsil Jr. and PLS president Dr. Dante Morales in a joint statement.

The alliance is faced with the challenge of how to convince the public that despite the many therapeutic advances, a healthy lifestyle is still the key in preventing and treating atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases.

Dr. Esperanza Cabral, overall chair of the congress organizing committee, laments that a number of our habits may be self-destructive.

"Unfortunately, although we may know these practices to be dysfunctional, we fail to even acknowledge the harm that they may be doing. Sedentary living, poor eating habits and smoking are accepted as part of daily life. Everything is OK as long as we are able to function, and we feel no reason to change especially if we derive pleasure from our routines," she says.

Lifestyle change tips

Dr. Cabral, who is the PSH vice president and a member of the Charter Research Foundation advisory body, offers the following tips to help us break the barriers that impede a successful lifestyle change.

- Progress your lifestyle change. Once your exercise program is under way, you may find yourself on a "plateau" where your fitness level does not seem to improve at all. Do not be discouraged. A little additional exercise may be all that is needed to push you to a new level.
- Build confidence through education. There is nothing wrong with being a beginner, and the more information you get, the better your chances will be of maintaining a lifestyle change.
- Set realistic short-term goals. Create a goal that will be easier and faster to accomplish and when you get there, set the next goal.
- Support yourself. If you make a poor food choice or miss a workout, forgive yourself and get back on track at the next meal or the next gym session.
- Set yourself up in a supportive environment. Find friends with similar goals and go through your lifestyle change with them.
- Re-frame your thinking. You are worthwhile and you deserve special treatment. When you take care of your health, you prove to yourself that you are important and special.

Parkinson's disease

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

A FRUSTRATION of modern medicine is the fact that many classic diseases still have no cure. One of these is Parkinson's.

Arvee Marc Sabelita has the following query: "I am from Cagayan de Oro City, and I am taking up BS Nursing at the Cagayan Capitol College. I'd like to know more about the nature of Parkinson's disease. How does it affect humans?"

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder resulting from the degeneration of neurons in the region of our brain (the *substantia nigra*) that controls movement. Because of this degeneration, certain brain chemicals (specifically, neurotransmitters known as dopamine) fall short, thus disturbing and even destroying movement.

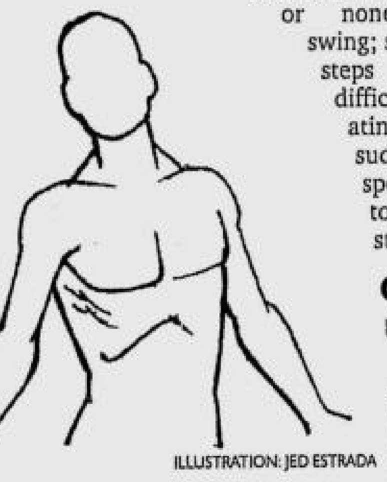

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Parkinson's is not a new disease. First described as the "shaking palsy" by a London doctor called James Parkinson in 1817, it nevertheless was discussed in the Indian medical system Ayurveda and mentioned in the Chinese medical text Nei Jing several millennia ago.

Today, in the United States alone, more than half a million people suffer from Parkinson's, affecting slightly more men than women. The disease increases with age—few people below 40 suffer from it, but the average age of affliction is 60. One of its most famous victim is actor Michael J. Fox of "Spin City" and "Back to the Future" fame.

Common symptoms

I quote the following symptoms verbatim from the Parkinson's Disease Foundation (www.pdf.org). Note that not every patient experiences all of them—in fact, most do not.

- Rigidity is an increased tone or stiffness in the muscles. Unless it is temporarily eased by anti-Parkinson's medications, rigidity is always present. However, it increases during movement. It is often responsible for a mask-like expression of the face. In some patients, rigidity leads to sensations of pain, especially in the arms and shoulders.
- Tremor is the symptom the public most often identifies with Parkinson's, but in fact, up to 25 percent of patients experience very slight tremor, or none at all. When it is present, the tremor may be worse on one side of the body. Besides affecting the limbs, it sometimes involves the head, neck, face and jaw.
- Bradykinesia means slowness of movement. This symptom is characterized by a delay in initiating movements, caused by the brain's slowness in transmitting the necessary instructions to the appropriate parts of the body. When the instructions have been received, the body responds slowly in carrying them out.
- Poor balance tends to affect people with PD. This is particularly true when they move abruptly, causing a sudden change in the position of their bodies. Some patients experience repeated falls due to poor balance.
- Walking problems commonly include a decreased or nonexistent arm swing; short, shuffling steps (festination); difficulty in negotiating turns; and sudden freezing spells (inability to take the next step).

Cause unknown

What causes Parkinson's? The data are not clear, although there are indeed many theories about possible causes.

Causes can be genetic, or environmental. The US National Institutes of Health (www.nih.org) reports: "Severe Parkinson's-like symptoms have been described in people who took an illegal drug contaminated with the chemical MPTP (1-methyl-4-phenyl-1,2,3,6-tetrahydropyridine) and in people who contracted a particularly severe form of influenza during an epidemic in the early 1900s.

"Recent studies of twins and families with Parkinson's have suggested that some people have an inherited susceptibility to the disease that may be influenced by environmental factors. The strong familial inheritance of the chromosome 4 gene is the first evidence that a gene alteration alone may lead to Parkinson's disease in some people."

There is no cure for Parkinson's, although medicines can be taken for severe symptoms. The most popular is levodopa (L-dopa) which helps increase dopamine in the brain.

The most radical option is brain surgery (pallidotomy), where the affected tissue is removed.

Another kind of surgery, where healthy dopamine-producing tissues are transplanted onto diseased areas, is currently being explored.

* * *

(Queena N. Lee-Chua, Ph.D., is an associate professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. She writes the column "Mind Games" for www.inq7.net every Wednesday. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.)

New generation hepatitis B vaccine more effective, says Israeli doctor

By Charles E. Buban

RECENT clinical tests have showed a third generation vaccine to be more effective against the virus that causes hepatitis B, raising hopes that the lethal disease will someday be eradicated.

With no cure yet found for hepatitis B, immunization is the best protection against the hepatitis B virus (HBV).

"Remarkable progress has been made since hepatitis B vaccine became available two decades ago and Sci-B-Vac may prove superior to all of them," announced Dr. Daniel Shouval of the Hadassah University Hospital in Israel during a recent visit to Manila.

For years, Shouval has been involved in the development of vaccines against viral hepatitis and has conducted clinical trials on a third generation hepatitis B vaccine.

Potent vaccine needed

A more potent vaccine for hepatitis B is urgently being sought because the disease strikes about two billion people worldwide. In the Asia-Pacific region alone, health authorities estimate that about 250 million people have chronic HBV infections.

In the Philippines, the prevalence of hepatitis B is between 2 percent and 7 percent of the population.

Hepatitis B infection could result in acute illness or could progress to a chronic illness, depending on the immune response of the patient.

People infected with HBV are at a high risk of developing cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer. Some 80 percent of liver cancers are caused by HBV infection.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Transmission

About 5 to 10 percent of adults who contract acute hepatitis B are unable to eliminate the virus and become carriers.

According to the World Health Organization, the effect on infants and children is more pronounced, with 90 percent of infected infants (less than 1 year) and 30 to 50 percent of infected children developing chronic infections.

The virus sometimes shows no symptoms, and many patients are not even aware that they are carriers and can unwittingly transmit the virus, spreading the disease further.

Hepatitis B is transmitted the same way as the AIDS virus—through contact with an infected person's blood, semen and other body fluids.

Rapid, effective, safe

According to Dr. Shouval, Sci-B-Vac has been proven to elicit a more rapid immonogenic response and is more effective and safe compared to yeast- or plasma-derived hepatitis B vaccines used today. He said the new vaccine's safety and efficacy have been established in more than 3,500 Asian and Caucasian patients.

Sci-B-Vac was derived by genetically modifying Chinese hamster ovary cells.

The vaccine was developed by the Singapore-based biotechnology company SciGen Ltd. and marketed in the Philippines by Zuellig Pharma.

Beer belly? Blame your genes instead

FITTING ROOM
JED E.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

NAPLES, Italy—Beer lovers around the world, raise your glasses—it might not only be how much you drink that determines the size of your beer belly, it could be your genes.

A team of Italian scientists has linked a gene, known as DD and present in about 40 percent of the population, to abdominal weight gain in men.

"Some people, despite their sacrifice of looking at calories and trying to exercise as much as they can, tend to put on fat because they are genetically susceptible," research leader Pasquale Strazzullo of the Federico II University of Naples Medical School said.

"And weight gain around the stomach is the way it goes, particularly for males," the trim doctor explained.

According to a study published earlier this month in the medical journal Annals of Internal Medicine, the researchers monitored 300 male factory workers over a 20-year period and found that DD carriers put on 50 percent more weight—an average 4.5 kg (9.9 lb) against 3 kg (6.6 lb) for non-carriers.

Obesity puzzle

The team found the waist of a DD carrier grew by an average of nearly three cm (one inch) over 10 years, compared to just under one cm (0.3 inches) for those without the gene.

The team also found around 52 percent of the DD men were overweight compared to almost 44 percent of non-carriers.

"Obesity is a big jigsaw and this study is a small piece we have slotted into place," Strazzullo said.

"Two gene variants have already been linked to weight gain but they are actually rare. The interest with this study is that the DD gene occurs in about 40 percent of the population."

The World Health Organization estimated in 2000 that there were some 300 million obese people worldwide, a leap from 200 million just five years earlier.

"The obesity epidemic is difficult to face because everything in our society tempts us to put on weight. What we eat and how much we exercise does matter, but there is a genetic tendency for some individuals," Strazzullo said.

Despite the new evidence linking DD to weight gain, Strazzullo says only half the mystery has been solved. Now scientists must try to unravel exactly how the process works.

Reuters

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3. Toyota Hilux 2.8 D Pick-up, Model 2000	Bataan	569,400.00

Additional information and request for inspection may be secured at the above address from **February 3-21, 2003** c/o Mr. R. C. Ocampo in Makati with tel. no. 810-6418; and in Bataan c/o Mr. R. C. Roque with tel. no. (047) 244-5886. Interested parties may obtain bid forms upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS TWO HUNDRED (P200.00) from the PPDC-Disposal Committee (Makati) or Site Administration Department (Bataan).

Deadline for submission of sealed bids is on **February 28, 2003, 1:30 PM** at the PNOC-PDC, 11/F, Lepanto Bldg., 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Public opening of bids shall immediately be conducted after the 1:30 PM deadline.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Deposit in the form of Cash or Manager's/ Cashier's Check equivalent to at least 10% of each bid price, acquired from any PPDC accredited banks.

PPDC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PPDC. PPDC further assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss they may incur in the preparation of their bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Signed this 29th day of January, 2003 in Makati City.

(Sgd.) **VICTORIO MARIO A. DIMAGIBA**
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – Feb. 1 & 9, 2003)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION/RE-BIDDING

Sealed proposals for the sale of scrap items listed below will be received at the Office of the PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, PMO-PULUPANDAN, 3rd Floor, Prudentialife Building, Luzuriaga-San Juan Streets, Bacolod City,not later than **FEBRUARY 13, 2003, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning** at which date, time and place said proposal will be opened in the presence of the bidders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ITEMS/PROPERTY

	Qty/Um	Min. Bid
One (1) Lot Steel Trusses (main with members,Steel Columns, Steel Columns (composite), Steel Columns (inside buttress), Purlins (z-type), Ga 24 GI Roofing, Steel Full Truss, Beams and Girders, Girts, Bracing/ Sagrods, Basketed/Re-Inforced Square Bars (12m x 43m), Basketed Re-Inforced Square Bars (9m x 50m x 50m), Square Bars, Bollard, Mooring Bitts, Purlins assorted sizes	1 Lot	P2,840,095.05

The abovementioned items are available for inspection at the Office of the Philippine Ports Authority at Pulupandan, Negros Occidental. Contact person is Port Manager NECITAS G. LAYOLA, JR., telephone number (034) 435-0415.

Issuance of Bid Proposals, Rules and Regulations of the bidding process may be secured by the interested bidders on February 3-6, 2003 from the Senior Supply Officer of the abovementioned office upon payment of TWO HUNDRED PESOS (Php 200.00) which is non-refundable.

All prospective bidders are invited to see the actual condition of the items considering that the sale shall be on "As-Is-Where-Is" "Cash and Carry" basis. The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality found therein or accept the bid proposal which in its judgement is most advantageous to the government. The Authority's decision on the matter shall be final and binding.

Authority to dispose through public bidding of the above described items is embodied in the General Manager's Memoranda dated August 26, 2000 and March 12, 2002.

16 January 2003, Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **MANUEL T. GORME**
Port District Manager, PDO-Visayas
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – Feb. 1 & 3, 2003)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Sealed proposals for the sale of scrap items will be received at the Office of the PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, PMO-ILOILO, Baseport, Loboc, Lapuz, Iloilo City, not later than February 12, 2003, at 2:30 in the afternoon, at which date, time and place said proposal will be opened in the presence of the bidders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ITEMS/PROPERTY

ITEMS/DESCRIPTION	QTY/UM	Min. Bid
Scrap Iron (Various sizes) (I-Beam, C-Channel, L-Bar, Flat Bar, MS Plate, Plain Round Bar, Hollow Steel Pile Hammer, BI Pipe, Total Weight of Scrap Iron – 66,410.58 kgs)	1 Lot	P219,154.92

The above-mentioned items are available for inspection at the Office of the Philippine Ports Authority at the Port Management Office-Iloilo, Iloilo City. Contact person is Port Manager ATTY. CHRISTIAN V. SANTILLAN, telephone numbers (033) 337-6945 and 337-7791.

Issuance of Bid Proposals, Rules and Regulations of the bidding process may be secured by the interested bidders on February 3-6, 2003 from the Senior Supply Officer of the above-mentioned office upon payment of TWO HUNDRED PESOS (Php 200.00) which is non-refundable.

All prospective bidders are invited to see the actual condition of the items considering that the sale shall be on "As-Is-Where-Is", "Cash and Carry" basis. The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality found therein or accept the bid proposal which in its judgement is most advantageous to the government. The Authority's decision on the matter shall be final and binding.

Authority to disposal through public bidding of the above-described items is embodied in the General Manager's Memoranda dated December 16, 2002.

16 January 2003, Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **MANUEL T. GORME**
Port District Manager
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – Feb. 1 & 3, 2003)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti
TRADE & INDUSTRY

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **CHABAR FURNITURE, INC. CORPORATION** with office address at Dela Cuesta St., Muzon, Taytay, Rizal for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as Existing Export Producer of Wood Furniture at a capacity of 3,350 pieces of various wood furniture per year with project site at the same office address stated above has been officially accepted on **January 22, 2003**.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 22nd day of January 2003.

(Sgd.) **FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - Feb. 1, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COOPERATION
Bldg. No. 3, 1st floor, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, Manila 1003
Telefax Nos. 711-95-82, Tel no: 781-88-43, 743-83-01 local 1310, 1311, 1304
e-mail address: bihc@doh.gov.ph; website: omega.doh.gov.ph/bihc

January 22, 2003

NOTICE

The Department of Health under the Early Childhood Development Project-Department of Health (ECDP-DOH) Component is need of the following consultant (individual) to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Project's Food Fortification sub-component:

1. **Business and Food Nutrition Situation Analyst (1)**

Interested individuals may get a copy of the Terms of Reference from Department of Health- Early Childhood Development Project, Ground Floor, Bldg. 3 San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila. Letters of interest with curriculum vitae and salary history must be submitted on or before **February 14, 2003** to the undersigned at the address below:

Bureau of International Health Cooperation
Department of Health
G/F Building 3, San Lazaro Compound
Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz
Manila

Should there be further inquiries, you may contact Ms. Sharon Andrea Lumpias, Executive Assistant- Early Childhood Development Project at telephone no. (632) 338-6516 and 743-8301 loc. 1343.

(Sgd.) **REMEDIOS V.S. PAULINO**
Director IV

(PDI--Feb. 1 & 2, 2003)

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

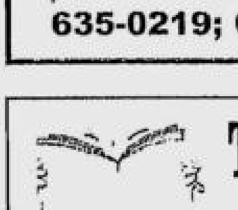
HEAD OFFICE:
897-8808 loc. 514, 516; 899-4425; 897-2535; 897-8425 (Telefax)

CUBAO:
912-9008 to 11 (Aurora)

MAKATI:
892-5578; 811-4361; 811-4370

KALAW:
528-0213; 527-3342

MEGAMALL:
635-0219; 635-0220



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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
City of Manila
CITY GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE

January 30, 2003

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The City General Services Office of Manila invites all accredited suppliers of the City and other interested parties and if not pre-qualified, to apply for pre-qualification and if pre-qualified, to bid and submit proposals for the supply and delivery of the one (1) year medical supplies requirements of its hospitals, Gat. Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center, Ospital ng Maynila Memorial Medical Center, Ospital ng Tondo, Ospital ng Sampaloc and the Manila Health Department.

Bid documents may be obtained from the City General Services Office starting **February 6, 2003** during regular office hours, located at the Second (2nd) Floor of the Barangay Bureau Building, A. Villegas Street, Manila (Tel. Nos. 528-0642 & 528-0643). A pre-bid conference for qualified suppliers shall be held on **February 13, 2003, 9:30 AM** at the aforesaid office.

Sealed bids shall be submitted on or before **February 19, 2003 at 9:00 AM**, when they shall be formally opened in the presence of the Bidding Committee and the contending bidders.

(Sgd.) **JAIME P. VALENCIA, JR.**
Officer-in-Charge
City General Services Office

(PDI – Feb. 1, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: *ssemail@info.com.ph* • Website: *http://www.sss.gov.ph*

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
1) Lourdes Guillermo	Unknown	Miguel Alberto SS#03-2657667-4	June 15, 2001
2) Carline Talisayan Andrino	Cagayan De Oro City	Eduardo Baring Andrino SS#08-0236197-6	January 23, 2002
3) Lucia Babon	Tizon, Tarangnan, Samar	Elpidio Babon SS#03-0236816-5	June 30, 2002
4) Amanda Corpuz-Bautista & Jimmy C. Bautista	Unknown	Alfredo C. Bautista SS#03-1403691-9	June 24, 2002
5) Herminigilda Bellalba	Unknown	Alberto B. Bellalba SS#05-0191489-9	November 11, 2002
6) Michael Cabalona	Unknown	Martin G. Cabalona SS#07-0280142-6	August 30, 2000
7) Visitacion, Loralie, Warel & Reliable Cabisay	East Dalurong, Kitaotao, Bukidnon	Bruno L. Cabisay SS#08-0804874-3	May 26, 1996
8) Encarnacion Ronamo	Unknown	Demetrio Catana SS#07-0603987-0	January 24, 1999
9) Lydia A. Condis	Sirawai, Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte	Salvador M. Condes SS#10-0048003-0	June 18, 2002
10) Sheryl Alura	Manila	Joel V. Culasi SS#33-3148724-7	January 25, 1999
11) Venilda or Venminihilda del Rosario	Bo. Sta. Ana, Taytay, Rizal	Jose David, Jr. SS#03-1554908-1	November 24, 2002
12) Dionisia Gonzales	Bonete St., Naga City	Domingo B. De Jesus SS#05-0113910-8	August 31, 2002
13) Remedios Javier	Unknown	Leonardo Fauni SS#03-3410197-6	October 11, 2002
14) Norma Amoro Laca	Rd. 25 Cogeo Vill., Brgy. Bagong Nayon, Antipolo City	Renato Fresnillo SS#33-1046225-4	October 10, 2002
15) Ma. Stella N. Gamas	180 Fort Santiago St., Quezon City	Alejandro C. Gamas SS#03-7162418-6	October 10, 2001
16) Evelyn Lagurin Marino Lagurin, Jr. Shiela Lagurin Lin Mar Lagurin Maricar Lagurin	Bitaog, Sta. Cruz, Davao Del Sur Pikit, Cotabato Tagig, Metro Manila	Marino Lagurin SS#03-1730981-8	February 14, 2002
17) Yolanda L. Omal	Brgy. Villa Bota, Gumaca, Quezon	Hugo L. Ledda SS#04-0425909-1	June 14, 2002
18) Gerturdes Rimando	Unknown	Carlito Madriaga SS#01-0128766-7	October 3, 2002
19) Irma Tan	Cupang, Muntinlupa City	Danilo C. Manuntag SS#03-5180147-9	August 29, 2002
20) Carolina Jocson	Mari St., Navotas, M.M.	Lamberto B. Mariano SS#33-3245785-2	May 24, 2002
21) Flora Flores	Chorillo St., Barangka, Marikina, Rizal	Inocencio Mendoza SS#03-0089640-7	August 11, 2002
22) Pia Mina	#44 East 14th St., East Tapinac, Olongapo City	Minerva G. Mina SS#03-1097830-5	May 6, 2001
23) Cristita A. Natividad	Unknown	Faustino Natividad SS#03-3996670-5	October 7, 2001
24) Rogelio Naya	Manila	Punsima C. Naya SS#06-0801518-3	August 27, 2002
25) Lucila Negrosa	Unknown	Alliano Negrosa SS#03-1392422-6	September 28, 2002
26) Luz Grajo	Unknown	Antonio Salgon SS#07-0436146-9	December 23, 1999
27) Angelita Palad	87 Jose Bugallon St., Proj. 4, Q.C	Fernando Lopez Talabis SS#03-0853490-6	May 22, 2001
28) Agueda C. Tamarra	Unknown	Romeo R. Tamarra SS#03-3117645-4	March 14, 2002
29) Anna G. Tapia	Del Pan, Sta. Ana Manila	Teresito T. Tapia SS#03-9384932-1	August 14, 2002
30) Ruel Viscaya Franklin Viscaya	Metro Manila	Elesio F. Viscaya SS#08-0540414-4	February 28, 1990

(PDI – Feb. 1, 2003)

– Nothing Follows–

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
Basement, MWSI Bldg., MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines 1100
Tel. Nos. (632) 926-3597, 435-2244, 920-5521 loc. 3044

FINAL NOTICE OF CLAIM

To date, the following have not attended to their Severance Pay claim provided for under the Concession Agreement between MWSS and MWSI:

Alegre, Rosendo
Araquel, Benjamin
Arcilla, Joselito
Avanceña, Virgilio
Bacani, Nestor
Bautista, Armano
Bocalbos, Ma. Theresa
Bonzon, Eliseo
Caringal, Romeo
Crisostomo, Cristobal
Dela Cruz, Pio
Delos Reyes, Nestor
Dolot, Alberto
Domingo, Albano, Jr.
Fallorina, Isidro
Fernandez, Ronelo
Galang, Danilo
Guttierez, Ramon
Hipolito, Mariano
Lido, Alberto
Lumanlan, Genaro
Mangulabnan, Raul
Mendoza, Enrique
Molinar, Romeo
Monarca, Mila Mae
Morales, Edilberto
Pates, Jocelyn
Patulot, Marcianito
Ramos, Aida
Sermino, Macario
Torio, Orlando
Villanueva, Fernando
Villanueva, Melito

The said claim shall be processed in accordance with the MWSI Policy on 'Payment of Severance Pay'. Submission of necessary documents shall be until April 15, 2003. Any claim filed after the set deadline shall no longer be given due course.

For details on requirements to be submitted, please coordinate with Ms. Cristina L. Santiago or Gloria S. David at telephone nos. 926-3597 and 435-2244 of HR Services, Administration.

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

INVITATION TO BID

The Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) invites interested parties to a public bidding for *Security Services and/ or Janitorial/Administrative Services Personnel* for CY 2003 to be held on **25 February 2003 at exactly 9:30 A.M. and 2:00 P.M.** respectively, Board Room, HLURB Bldg., Kalayaan Ave., corner Mayaman St., Diliman, Quezon City.

Bid forms and instruction to bidders may be secured at the General Services Division, Ground Floor, HLURB Bldg., Kalayaan Ave., corner Mayaman St., Diliman, Quezon City, any time during office hours upon payment of non-refundable fee of *P200.00.*

Request for clarification and other inquiries may be addressed to the said office in writing or in person before the public bidding or thru telephone number 924-33-72.

HLURB reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formalities in the bids received and to accept such bids which are considered most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **FRANCISCO L. DAGÑALAN**
Commissioner and Chairman
Bids, Awards & Contract Review Committee

(PDI–Feb. 1 & 2, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC), pursuant to the mandate of Republic Act Nos. 8189 and 8436, invites interested offerors, vendors, suppliers or lessors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement by purchase, lease, lease with option to purchase, or otherwise, supplies, equipment, materials and services needed for a comprehensive Automated Election System, consisting of three (3) phases: (a) registration/ verification of voters, (b) automated counting and consolidation of votes, and (c) electronic transmission of election results, with an approved budget of TWO BILLION FIVE HUNDRED MILLION (Php 2,500,000,000) Pesos.

Only bids from the following entities shall be entertained:

a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/proprietorships;
b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., a group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract, provided that Filipino ownership thereof shall be at least sixty percent (60%); and
e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority.

Bid documents for the three (3) phases may be obtained starting 10 February 2003, during office hours from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat/ Office of Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra, 7th Floor Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, upon payment at the Cash Division, Commission on Elections, in cash or cashier's check, payable to the Commission on Elections, of a non-refundable amount of FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 15,000.00) for each phase. For this purpose, interested offerors, vendors, suppliers or lessors have the option to participate in any or all of the three (3) phases of the comprehensive Automated Election System.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on 13 February 2003, at 9:00 a.m. at the Session Hall, Commission on Elections, Postigo Street, Intramuros, Manila. Should there be questions on the bid documents, bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat prior to the scheduled Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission to the BAC of applications for eligibility and bid envelopes for the supply of the comprehensive Automated Election System shall be at the Session Hall, Commission on Elections, Postigo Street, Intramuros, Manila on 28 February 2003 at 9:00 a.m.

The COMELEC reserves the right to review the qualifications of the bidders after the bidding and before the contract is executed. Should such review uncover any misrepresentation made in the eligibility statements, or any changes in the situation of the bidder to materially downgrade and substance of such statements, the COMELEC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by it in the preparation of its bid.

28 January 2003.

(Sgd.) **RALPH C. LANTION**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Feb. 1 & 8, 2003)

National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID
AD NO. PD2003-01

Opening Date : February 19, 2003 – 2:00 PM
Prebid : February 04, 2003 – 2:00 PM
E-Bidding : February 25, 2003 – 2:00 PM

Door-to-door delivery (inclusive of all expenses) including segregation, loading, hauling, unloading and proper stockpiling of various woodpoles and steel poles including Davit Arms from different pick-up points to Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro & Calapan Oriental Mindoro. P2,931,137.00

Interested parties are invited to apply for eligibility and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened publicly at the Sampaguita Rm. Ground Floor Bldg. 2 NPC-OBC, Quezon Avenue cor. Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Eligibility forms and bidding documents are available on **January 23, 2003** at the Accreditation, Bidding & IT Services, Materials Management Department upon payment of P50.00 per schedule which is non refundable and presentation of TIN/ supplier's number (DCE).

Issuance of eligibility forms and bidding documents **mornings only, 8:30 to 11:30 A.M.** For inquiries please call no. 921-25-74. Last day of issuance of bidding documents **February 17, 2003.**

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation.

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
NPC-OBC (Head Office)
Diliman, Quezon City

(PDI – Jan. 24 & Feb. 1, 2003)

INVITATION TO REBID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS "AS IS, WHERE IS"

DATE & TIME OF REBIDDING : February 18, 2003 at 2:00 PM

The National Power Corporation, Genco-6 invites interested parties to bid on various unserviceable/scrap items listed below:

LOT #	Description of Unserviceable Item	Qty/Unit	Location	Min. Bid
1	Used Oil	79 drums	NPC/PGI - TIWI	P 16,290.00
2	Scrap/waste materials consist of 142 pcs. Used batteries, used pipes/fittings, tanks, electrical parts, junked vehicles/equipment approximately 650 metric tons	1 LOT	NPC/PGI - TIWI	2,009,260.00
6	Retired stationary machines and equipment composed of centrifugal pumps, engines, compressor, generators, boom truck and Crane, FMC Linkbelt HTC-35	1 LOT	PGI - MAKBAN (Bulalo 30)	1,239,103.68

Bid in the prescribed form shall be enclosed in sealed envelopes and shall be received at SLR Bidding Room until 12:00 noon on February 18, 2003, after which bids shall be opened at 2:00 p.m. in the presence of attending bidders. Bids shall be accompanied by the following:

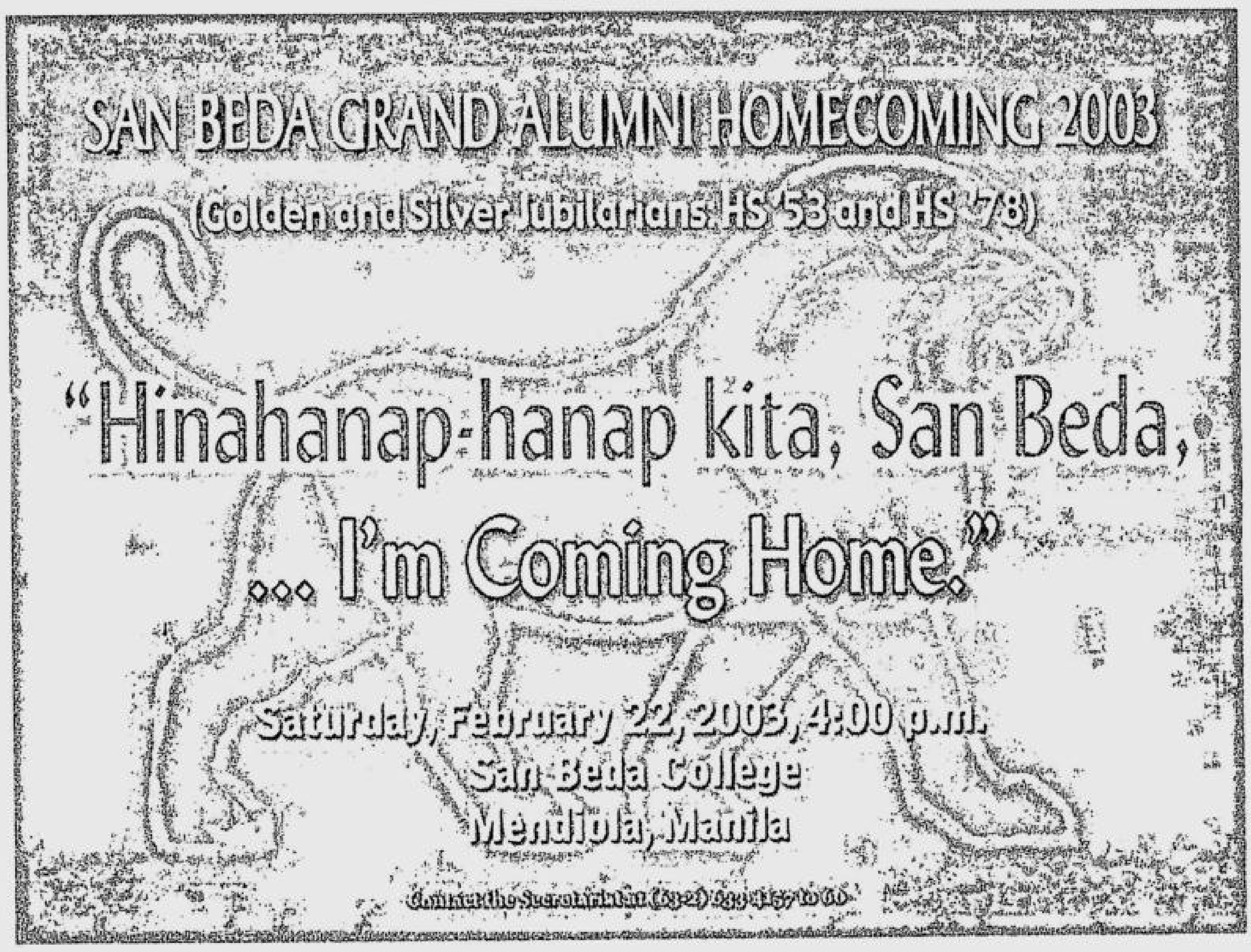
1.) Bidders Bond in the form of Cash, Manager's Check equivalent to 5% of the total bid price.
2.) Latest Income Tax Return and/or Financial Statement of the Company.
3.) Certificate of Inspection

Request for inspection and bid form may be obtained from GENCO 6 - PTWS Office, San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna at P100.00 per set which is non-refundable. No bid documents will be issued on the date of bidding. For inquiries, please call (02) 520-82-29.

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waives formalities found therein and accept offers most advantageous to NPC.

R. C. CARDENO, JR.

(PDI-Feb. 1, 2003)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(Golden and Silver Jubilarians, HS '53 and HS '78)
"Hinahanap-hanap kita, San Beda,
... I'm Coming Home."
Saturday, February 22, 2003, 4:00 p.m.
San Beda College
Mendiola, Manila

INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Chinese New Year

Q. Why does the date of the Chinese New Year change from year to year? Why the animal symbols?

A. The four-day Chinese New Year festival begins at the first moon after the sun enters the constellation of Aquarius. Thus the opening day may fall between January 22 and February 20 of the Gregorian calendar we use. The use of animal symbols is more legend than fact. The story goes that Buddha invited all animals to visit him one New Year's day. He then named the astrological years after the first 12 that came – rat, ox, tiger, rabbit (or hare), dragon, snake, horse, goat (or sheep), monkey, rooster, dog, and pig (or boar).

For the Record. Over 50 percent of the country's estimated 900,000 ethnic Chinese (representing about 1.5 percent of the Philippine population) live in Metro Manila. Almost all first-wave Chinese immigrants to the Philippines were lower-class males from Fukien province of mainland China.

Ooops! Contrary to popular notion, the abacus was not invented in China. It originated in Egypt in about 2000 B.C., almost a millennium before it reached the Far East.

WORD WATCH

Chopsticks (chap'stiks) : pidgin English of the Chinese *k'wai-tsze*, "the quick ones."

PDI – February 1, 2003

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Lamb & Rice Select

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Warehouse Sale Price: P1675.00

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Minimum of 5 bags per order

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First 5 customers receive additional P50.- off per bag

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

Our Dearly Beloved

ZENAIDA S. RIVERO

(October 1, 1930 – January 29, 2003)

Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 29, 2003 at the age of 72.

Her loving parents **BUENAVENTURA** and **AGRIPINA** (†), sisters **ROSARIO**, **CONCHITA** (†), **CORAZON** (†), **MILAGROS**; brother **MANUEL**; brothers-in-law and sister-in-law, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their home at Mac Arthur Highway, Calvario, Meycauayan, Bulacan (in front of Meycauayan College).

Interment will be on Sunday, February 2 at Meycauayan Memorial Park, Zamora (behind St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church) after the 3:00 p.m. Mass.

ESPERANZA GUZMAN BALMEO

Passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on the 25th day of January 2003 at the age of 91.

A loving wife to **PROTASIO VILLAESTER BALMEO** (†), a beloved mother to **ROSAURO**, **ROLANDO** (†), **RODRIGO**, **Rev. Fr. SIMEON TRINIDAD**, **FROILAN**, **ADOLFO**, **VIRGINIA** & **ANITA**.

We, her family and all her other relatives and friends, request those whose lives have been touched by our beloved PANCING to pray for the repose of her soul as she is born into Eternal Life.

Her remains lie in state at the St. John the Apostle Parish Church, Labo, Camarines Norte.

Interment will be on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 at the Holy Sepulchre Memorial Park, Labo, Camarines Norte after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the St. John the Apostle Parish Church.

"She's worth far more than jewels; she hath opened her hand to the needy
and stretched out her arms to the poor... Give her a reward of her labors,
and let her works praise her at the city gates." Proverb 31

Ma. ELENITA "Helen" GALANG GAÑA, M.D.

Joined our Creator on January 26, 2003
at Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, California, USA

Her loving husband **Jun**; children **Ted**, **Brian** and **Meggie**; parents **Sendong** (†) and **Luming** (†); her brothers **Eddie**, **Orly** and **Lito**; sisters-in-law **Regie**, **Fely** and **Finina**; her parents-in-law **Bening** and **Zeny** (†); relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains will arrive on Sunday morning, February 2, 2003 and will lie in state at the St. Jerome Emiliani Church, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

She will be transferred to Our Lady of Fatima Church in Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 at 2:00 p.m.

She will be laid to rest in the family mausoleum at the Binakayan Cemetery after the 3:00 p.m. Concelebrated Mass.

In Memoriam

On the **Fifth Death Anniversary** of

Corazon R. Cui

On the 1st of February 2003, her 5th Death Anniversary, Masses and prayers will be offered at St. Paul's Parish, Richmond, BC, Canada; St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang and Mary Mother of Good Counsel Church, Marcelo Green Village.

We are very grateful to all who keep our beloved **CORITO** in their memory and continue to pray for her.

Mackie, **Gabby**, **Rosabel**, **Carla**, **Mako**; and grandson **Zachary**.

APOLONIO D. DELA CRUZ, JR.

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on January 30, 2003.

His loving wife **Nelia**; children **Cynthia**, **Dylan**, **Norman**, **Ana**, **Meggy**, **Carlo**, **Francis**; brother and sisters, grandchildren, in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

Our Beloved Mother

JUANITA YRAOLA LECHUGA

Peacefully joined our Creator
on January 30, 2003 at the age of 79.

Her remains lie in state at
Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels,
Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on February 02, 2003
11:00 a.m. at Manila Memorial Park,
Parañaque City.

Father Mattheus (Mat) van Santvoord, MSC

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on January 30, 2003
in Lapu-Lapu City

Born in Tilburg, the Netherlands on April 2, 1920, Fr. Mat arrived in the Philippines in 1947 and ministered for more than 55 years with great zeal, enthusiasm and wholehearted dedication to the people in the MSC areas of apostolate in Surigao and Agusan. He served the faithful as parish priest of Surigao City, Marihatag, Buenavista, Nasipit, Cabadbaran and Kitcharao and, for the past 18 years, ministered to the sick as chaplain in the hospitals in Butuan City.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart request you to remember him in your prayers, confident that he, who gave himself with his whole heart to people and country, lives now with the Lord of whose Heart he was a faithful missionary.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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SIDNEY COLLADO PASCUA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on January 29, 2003

His loving parents **Arthur** and **Ester**; brother **Arthur II**; sisters **Marjorie** and **Krishka**, and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 2, 2003 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10·39

Removal of foreign ownership limits sought

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

EUROPEAN investors are urging Philippine legislators to include the removal of foreign equity restraints on public utilities, media and advertising in the proposed constitutional changes to spur more capital flows into the country.

In a speech during the "EU-RP Partnership: Focus on New Frontiers" forum, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines president William Bailey said more European interest and investments could be harnessed if some of the constitutional restrictions were removed specifically for public utilities (which should be at least 60 percent owned by Filipinos) and media and advertising (100 percent owned by Filipinos).

"Today's debate from cha-cha to con-con is focusing on changes in the political system, but it is essential that the necessary changes and adjustments in the economic field are not forgotten," Bailey said.

Aside from the relaxation of foreign ownership restrictions, Bailey said the government must ensure a predictable (all valid contracts should be respected and upheld) and a level playing field (the Flag Law which gives priority to Filipino suppliers in government supply deals should be abolished) before more European investors would start putting their money into the Philippines.

For its part, the Philippine government has stepped up its image building in Europe so that investors in the region would understand the country better.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos said the EU was a vital partner for the Philippines because it has been the country's largest source of direct investments in the Philippines since 1990 accounting for nearly a quarter of all foreign capital that poured into the country in the last 12 years.

Ramos said it was also the largest lender to the Philippines with EU banks accounting for almost half of all outstanding bank credit to the Philippines. The EU is also the second largest export market of the Philippines with trade increasing by an average 22 percent annually.

EU-RP Partnership:
Foc
Nev

EU-RP PARTNERSHIP. (L-R) Henry Schumacher, William Bailey, Paul Shafer, FVR, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Ambassador Jan De Kok and Cielito Habito presents the Action Agenda during the EU-RP partnership business forum at the Makati Shangrila Hotel.

PDI PHOTO/VAL HANDUMON

Wealth creation formula seen reversing poor economic trend

By Michelle V. Remo

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said low productivity, high cost of doing business, high business risks and low growth potential were the causes of the country's poverty.

Neri made this assessment in his presentation of the government's "Plan 747," which aims to achieve a 7 percent annual economic growth in the next seven years, during a lecture series at the Asian Institute of Management.

To realize the plan, the National Economic and Development Authority chief presented his formula for "national wealth creation," that explained why the country remains poor and provided directions on how to reverse the current situation.

Statistics presented by Neri during a lecture series at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) on Wednesday showed that labor productivity declined from about P38,000 per person per year in 1998 to about P33,000 in 2001. This translates to only P3,000 monthly per individual.

To address this problem, Neri said the government should institute microeconomic reforms like support to small and medium enterprises. This, he said, was in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's stance to shift the country's focus from macroeconomics to microeconomics.

Currently, the government is assisting SMEs through instituting various lending activities under its "Yabong Maliliit na Negosyo" program.

The Neda chief also recommends the revitalization of the mining industry, which is eyed to be a good contributor to the country's gross domestic product.

Neri said the government should exert effort to improve the law and order situation in the country as well as to be consistent with its policies so as not to turn off investors. These, he said, would reduce the risk of doing business in the country. He added that the courts should also minimize the issuance of temporary restraining orders involving corporate issues.

He also called for road and infrastructure developments to ensure efficient operations.

To fulfill the government's Plan 747, Neri said there should be a convergence of all the branches of the government—the legislative, executive and judiciary—since all of them affect the economic climate.

OWNERSHIP CEILING

Rural banks keep exemption

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has retained the exemption of rural banks from the 40 percent ownership ceiling for individual shareholders.

BSP Deputy Governor for the Supervision and Examination Sector Alberto Reyes said the board agreed in its meeting on Thursday not to force shareholders of existing rural banks to divest even as the exemption provided by law had lapsed.

"The board approved the policy to clarify what to do with the excess in ownership versus the ceiling," Reyes said in an interview.

The old General Banking Act prescribed a 20 percent ceiling on individual shareholders of all banks. The ceiling has been relaxed to 40 percent when the amended General Banking Law was passed in 2000.

A separate charter for rural banks, however, exempted these banks from the ownership ceiling for a 10-year period until April 2002.

Reyes estimated that about 50 percent of the country's 776 rural banks were currently overshooting the ownership ceilings.

"Under the board ruling, the shareholders need not divest, Existing banks will still be allowed to go up to 100 percent (ownership by an individual)," he noted.

But if the banks decide to henceforth reduce the individual ownership, Reyes noted that they would no longer be able to reclaim their exemption.

Also, he noted that new rural banks to be put up in the future would not be covered by the exemption.

Rural banks, which cater more to retail clients who are not being serviced by the bigger banks, have a smaller capitalization requirement.

Rural banks within Metro Manila are required to put up P32 million while those in cities like Cebu and Davao are required to raise P16 million.

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SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Associate Editor Edmund L. Sicam

Female filmmakers shine at Sundance film festival

PARK CITY, Utah—Women filmmakers and stars found the limelight at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, although some hurdles still have to be surmounted before their work appears in theaters around the world.

Great shows

"It was a good festival. We had great shows. Everything sold out," said Helen Stickler, director and producer of "Stoked: The Rise and Fall of Gator." "They have opportunities for all the directors to meet each other and talk to one another," she said.

While the movie—about a celebrated skateboarder from the 1980s—won acclaim, no deal was struck to distribute the film. "It raised awareness for the film and it was seen by people in the industry," said Stickler.

While mainstream Hollywood is seen as a male-dominated club for producers and directors, at Sundance women tend to fare better when it comes to taking prizes.

SUNDANCE
2003

PATRICIA Clarkson accepts a special jury prize for her performance in the film "The Station Agent, Pieces of April and All the Real Girls."

Female winners at this year's event included Catherine Hardwicke, who won the festival's dramatic directing award for the film "Thirteen" starring Holly Hunter.

Jury

A special jury prize for outstanding performance was awarded by the dramatic jury to Patricia Clarkson, who has appeared four times in Sundance films.

Clarkson won the award for her work in "The Station Agent, Pieces of April and All the Real Girls." "This has been an extraordinary week for me," said Clarkson as she received the prize.

"The Murder of Emmett Till" directed by Stanley Nelson, and "A Certain Kind of Death" directed and produced by Blue Hadaegh and Grover Babcock won special jury prizes from the Sundance Festival's documentary jury.

Most insiders concurred that the showing by women in all categories at Sundance 2003 was strong and impressive.

Stickler, an independent filmmaker, said: "The film has a message about fame in our society. We elevate people but overlook warning signs because we admire them for their ability." The skateboarder in her film is now in prison serving sentence for murder.

"Yes, Sundance still matters," said Geoffrey Gilmore, director of the Sundance Film Festival to the awards program audience. "Thank you for making films that matter!" *AFP*

Leonardo DiCaprio sees similarities between actors and con-artists

By Andrew McKenzie

DICAPRIO. Plays youthful prodigy in the art of fraud.

BERLIN—Leonardo DiCaprio says playing a con-artist in his new film "Catch Me If You Can" was not much of a stretch.

Impostor

"Acting is all about being an impostor," the 28-year-old said at a press conference ahead of the German premiere of the movie.

Directed by Steven Spielberg, the film chronicles the criminal career of 1960s grifter Frank Abagnale, played by DiCaprio.

Abagnale was a youthful prodigy in the art of fraud, and the film shows him pursuing conventional success and respectability through unconventional methods, like counterfeiting checks and falsifying identities. By the time of his arrest by FBI agent Carl Hanratty, played in the film by Tom Hanks, Abagnale had written $2.5 million of forged checks and had successfully passed himself off as an airline pilot, a doctor and a lawyer.

Charm

"He is a professional actor," said DiCaprio, who met Abagnale to prepare for his role. "I was immediately disarmed by his charm."

Spielberg said he also felt an affinity with the protagonist.

The Oscar-winning director said he found his early years of life in Phoenix, Arizona so tedious that he resorted at age 16 to impersonating a movie executive to get access to the Universal Pictures lot.

"My entire movie career sprung from sheer boredom," he told a crowded room in Berlin's Adlon hotel.

"Catch Me If You Can" was released last year in the United States and has already grossed more than $130 million at the box office. *AP*

Highlights of Hollywood film lineup for 2003

LOS ANGELES—Here are the highlights of Hollywood's 2003 film slate. Many films do not yet have specific release dates, and dates are subject to change.

Specific dates

For films with specific dates, the month of release is noted in parentheses.

Winter and Spring:

"Against the Ropes." Meg Ryan as a female boxing manager, ushering her new recruit (Omar Epps) to contender status. (March)

"Agent Cody Banks." Shyness undermines a teen spy (Frankie Muniz) assigned to date a high school babe. (March)

"Anger Management." A public outburst lands Adam Sandler in the care of rage counselor Jack Nicholson. (April)

"Assassination Tango." Robert Duvall writes, directs and stars in the story of a hit man in South America. (March)

"Basic." "Pulp Fiction's" John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson reunite in a thriller about the disappearance of elite commandos. (April)

RYAN. Portrays a boxing manager in "Against the Ropes."

PALTROW. Cast as a stewardess in "View From the Top."

Divorced lawyer

"Bringing Down The House." A divorced attorney (Steve Martin) learns that his online sweetheart is a prison escapee (Queen Latifah). (March)

"Buffalo Soldiers." An Army wheeler-dealer (Joaquin Phoenix) battles the brass. (March)

"Bulletproof Monk." A monk with no name (Chow Yun-Fat) seeks a new protector for a powerful ancient scroll. (April)

"Confidence." A grifter (Edward Burns) stages his biggest con to repay debts to a crime boss (Dustin Hoffman).

"The Core." Aaron Eckhart and Hilary Swank journey to the center of the earth to save the world. (March)

"Cradle 2 The Grave." A Taiwanese agent (Jet Li) helps a gang leader (DMX) rescue his kidnapped daughter. (February)

"Daredevil." Ben Affleck as the blind comic-book hero whose other senses are superhuman. (February)

"Dark Blue." An LA police drama set days before the 1992 riots. With Kurt Russell and Ving Rhames. (February)

"Deliver Us From Eva." Three men plot to free themselves from their mates' imperious older sister. With LL Cool J. (February)

"Down With Love." Renee Zellweger and Ewan McGregor in a throwback to hip '60s sex comedies. (April)

"Dreamcatcher." Stephen King's tale of friends battling supernatural evil. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan and co-starring Morgan Freeman.

"Duplex." Danny DeVito directs Ben Stiller and Drew Barrymore as a couple plotting to get rid of a pesky tenant.

"From Justin To Kelly." It had to happen—"American Idol" stars Kelly Clarkson and Justin Guarini team for a spring-break romance. (April)

Epic

"Gods And Generals." Robert Duvall in an epic set in the early years of the Civil War, a prequel to "Gettysburg." (February)

"The Good Thief." Nick Nolte plans a casino heist on the French Riviera. Neil Jordan directs. (April)

"A Guy Thing." A groom (Jason Lee) scrambles to cover up an embarrassing encounter with his fiancee's cousin (Julia Stiles).

"Head Of State." Chris Rock directs and stars in a comedy about an obscure politician nominated for president. (March)

"How To Lose A Guy in 10 Days." For a column, a writer (Kate Hudson) sets out to mess things up with a new beau (Matthew McConaughey). (February)

"The Hunted." A tracker (Tommy Lee Jones) chases an assassin (Benicio Del Toro). William Friedkin directs. (March)

Deserted motel

"Identity." Travelers discover there's a killer among them at a deserted motel. With John Cusack, Ray Liotta and Amanda Peet. (March)

SANDLER. Co-stars with Jack Nicholson in "Anger Management."

"It Runs In The Family." Kirk Douglas and son Michael join other family members for a multigenerational comic drama. (April)

"The Jungle Book 2." Disney's animated sequel about wild child Mowgli features the voices of John Goodman and Haley Joel Osment. (February)

"Kangaroo Jack." Two pals (Jerry O'Connell and Anthony Anderson) pursue a kangaroo that hopped off with mob cash.

"The Life Of David Gale." A death-penalty opponent (Kevin Spacey) faces execution for murder. Kate Winslet co-stars. (February)

"Malibu's Most Wanted." A rapper's lifestyle infringes on his dad's political career. With Jamie Kennedy, Taye Diggs and Blair Underwood.

"A Mighty Wind." Christopher Guest's mock documentary about '60s folkies reuniting for a memorial concert. (April)

"National Security." Martin Lawrence and Steve Zahn are mismatched security guards chasing smugglers.

"Old School." Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell and Vince Vaughn revisit college days by starting a frat house. (February)

"Prozac Nation." A Harvard freshman (Christina Ricci) copes with depression. (March)

Brilliant trainee

"The Recruit." CIA honcho Al Pacino taps a brilliant trainee (Colin Farrell) to find a mole in the agency.

"Shanghai Knights." "Shanghai Noon" buddies Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson on a killer's trail in London. (February)

"Spider." An ex-mental patient (Ralph Fiennes) copes with painful memories. (February)

"Tears Of The Sun." Bruce Willis as a Navy SEAL torn between duty and justice on a rescue mission. (March)

"Veronica Guerin." Cate Blanchett in the true story of a Dublin reporter slain during an investigation of Irish drug lords.

"View From The Top." Gwyneth Paltrow hits turbulence in her goal of becoming a top stewardess. *AP*

(To be concluded)

DIGITAL LG QUIZ

PEREZ (left) with Paolo Bediones, Regine Tolentino and program staffers.

Pat Perez finds fulfillment in directing 'Digital LG Quiz' show

By Nestor U. Torre

PAT Perez, the director of the popular "Digital LG Quiz" show, is elated over the program's success over the past three years. Not many educational shows are able to continue telecasting for that long a time, and reach so many young viewers throughout the country, who are motivated to excel in their own studies.

Heightened response

This "multiplier" effect can be felt in the heightened response of both viewers and prospective contestants to Channel 7 and Alta Productions' weekly quiz program.

"Our ratings are high," Pat observes. "But they aren't what count most to us, it's more what we do with the show, and how it affects so many students nationwide."

The program's success has been hard-won, as indicated by Pat's run-down of concept and production gambits that have made the program appealing to young viewers:

"Each tournament year, we highlight a theme or a body of destinations that guide the creative directions we take. In our first two years, we motivated our young viewers to explore the universe, its constellations and other heavenly bodies.

"Last year, we tried to trace the time line of man's evolution. We began with prehistory, and moved through the classical age, the middle ages, the age of chivalry, the renaissance, the age of exploration, the industrial revolution, the atomic age, the space age, the computer age, and on to the genetic revolution and the digital age.

Fourth season

"This year, on our fourth full season, we are embarking on an eco-tour to instill greater awareness of the needs and problems of our environment and what students and other young people can do to protect and enhance it."

The eco-tour recently began with a focus on important coral reefs, like Tubbataha and Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The second month highlights the rain forests, like Brazil's dense Amazon canopy.

Succeeding features include deserts (the Sahara and Gobi), great mountains (Himalayas, Everest, Fuji), grasslands (African safari plains), Arctic tundra (Siberia), tropical savannah (plains of Brazil), Chaparral (California shrubland), coniferous forest (Canada), Antarctic glaciers, ocean floor (Marianas trench), and the Banaue Terraces in the Philippines.

Popular segments

The show's popular segments include Password (warm-up round consisting of five clues), Picture Puzzle (from mystery personalities, moving on to mystery books), Think-Tac-Toe (more fun categories pertaining to everyday life, like interactive games), Blockbusters (filmclips, MTV, science and history clips, now expanded to include blockbuster plays, concerts and books), and Megabytes (now with Isip-Pinoy and ICT categories, to be more in sync with the times).

In addition, the show's set for Year Four is, for the first time, using LCD monitors made by LG Electronics.

Finally, the program's new LG Circle of Wizards (past quarterly champions) will reach out to depressed barangays, rural areas, homes for streetchildren and orphanages. There, the Wizards are prepared to offer computer courses, science labs, math tutorials, poetry and storywriting workshops, arts and crafts, techins, ecology field trips, etc.

On its fourth year, "LG Digital Quiz" is on a roll, and poised to top its past achievements. No wonder director Pat Perez is so gung-ho about the show's prospects for 2003—and the years after that!

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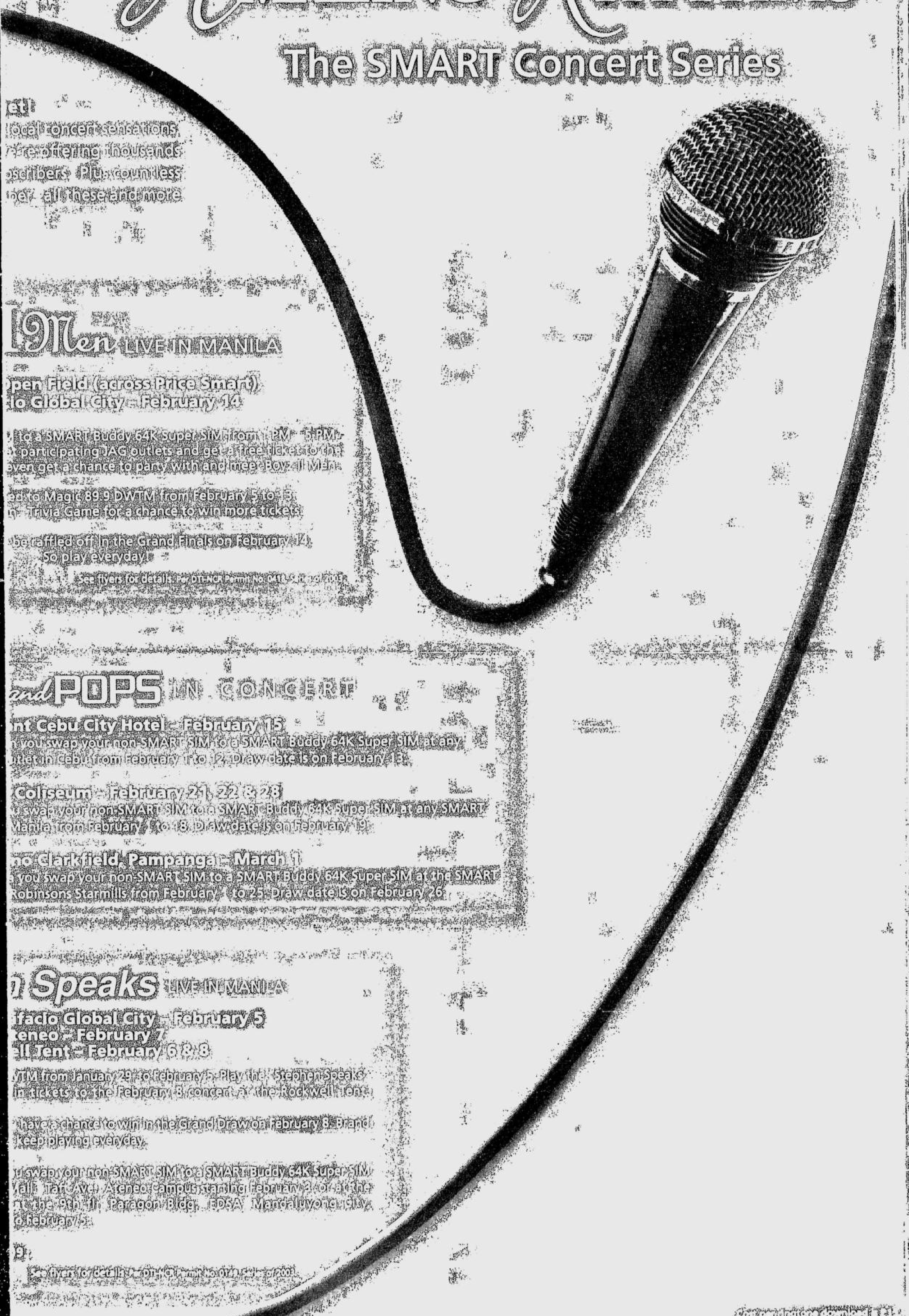

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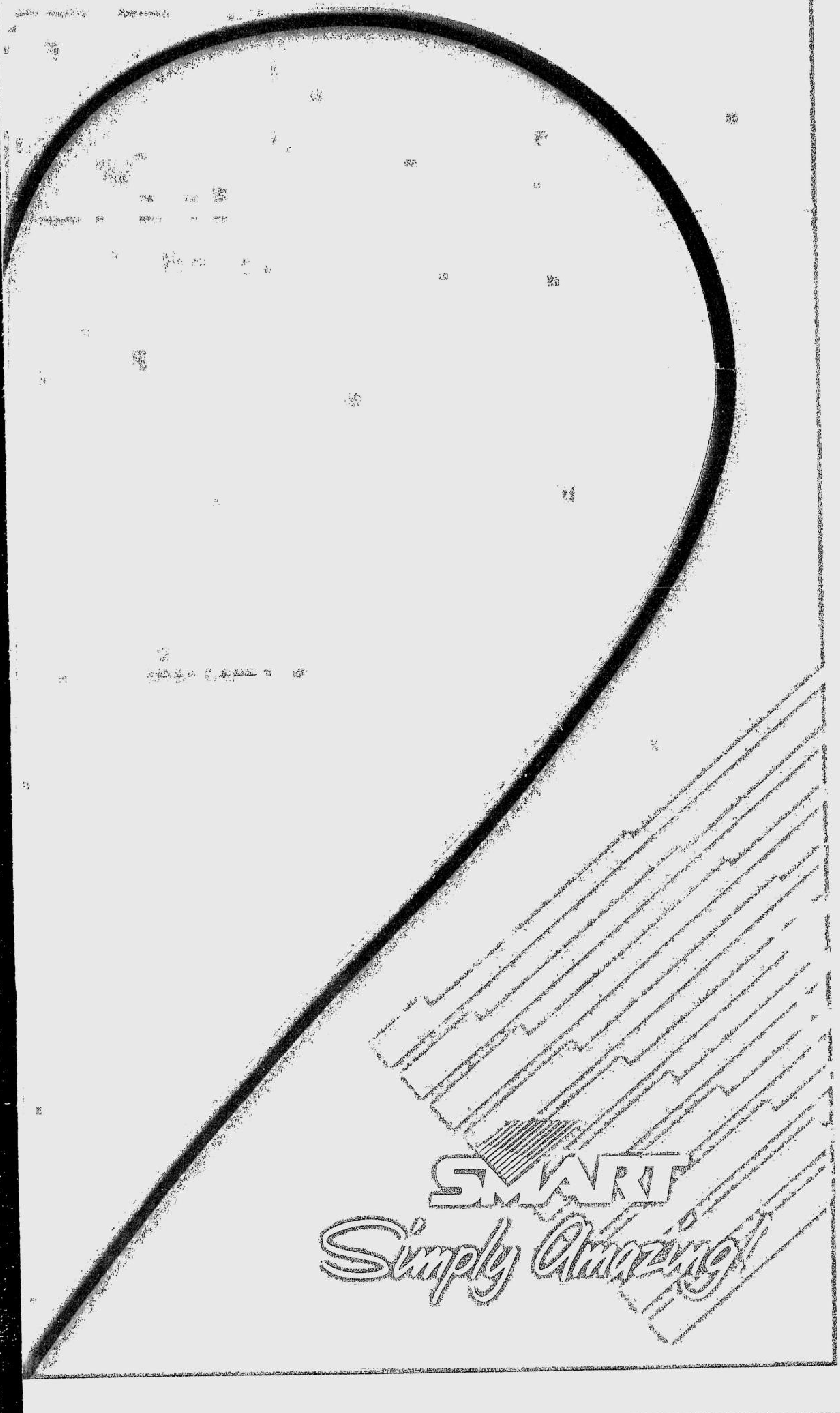
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Simply Amazing!

IAN MCKELLEN in "The Lord of the Rings" sequel.

BARRYMORE, Diaz and Liu reunite in new "Charlie's Angels" film.

KEANU Reeves fights again in "Matrix Reloaded."

Hollywood looks for repeat business in 2003

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—Sequels succeeded so well in 2002 that film studios have decided to do an encore.

Prequels

So 2003 shapes up as Year of the Sequel, Part 2. About two dozen follow-up movies, along with a few prequels, are on the lineup, some craved by audiences for a decade or more, others hitting theaters less than a year after their predecessors.

The four-year wait for a follow-up to the sci-fi smash "The Matrix" ends in a big way. In mid-May, Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne and Carrie-Anne Moss continue their battle against Earth's machine conquerers in "The Matrix Reloaded," to be followed just six months later by "The Matrix Revolutions," the trilogy's end.

The "Matrix" sequels were shot simultaneously, like the three installments of Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings," whose current chapter, "The Two Towers," is on track to surpass the box-office results of 2001's "The Fellowship of the Ring."

Whirlwind release

There's only about 320 days of impatient pacing left till the final chapter of Jackson's treatment of J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy epic arrives. "The Return of the King" opens just before Christmas, concluding the whirlwind release of all three films in a two-year span.

In contrast, it's been 12 years since Arnold Schwarzenegger's cyborg-from-the-future promised he'd be back. He finally returns over the Fourth of July in "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines," battling a female cyborg babe sent back by evil machines to snuff the now-adult savior of humanity, John Connor.

Other big sequels: Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen and the rest of the superhuman mutants in the new "X-Men" chapter, "X2"; "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle," reuniting chic heroines Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu; "American Wedding," in which some of the "American Pie" gang attend the nuptials of gross-gag victim Jason Biggs and band geek Alyson Hannigan; "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider—The Cradle of Life," with Angelina Jolie back in action as the roaming hero of the video game; and Will Smith and Martin Lawrence as narcotics cops in "Bad Boys II."

Also, "The Fast and the Furious 2," minus Vin Diesel but with Paul Walker and loads more souped-up cars; Antonio Banderas back with his espionage family for "Spy Kids 3," and reprising his gunslinging "Desperado" role in "Once Upon a Time in Mexico"; Reese Witherspoon's new day in court with "Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde"; and Ice Cube with another bad hair day in "Barbershop 2."

Animated classic

Then there's "The Jungle Book 2," Disney's follow-up to its animated classic; "Scary Movie 3," the latest in the horror-spoof franchise; "Shanghai Knights," Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson's follow-up, to "Shanghai Noon," and "The Whole Ten Yards," a new hitman comedy with Bruce Willis and Matthew Perry of "The Whole Nine Yards."

Given the success of 2002 franchises such as "The Lord of the Rings," "Star Wars," "Harry Potter," "Austin Powers" and "Men in Black," it's hard to knock the business sense in giving audiences more of the same.

"Studios want to make movies people want to see. It's all about getting butts in the seats," said John Singleton, director of "The Fast and the Furious 2." "People respond to characters they admire and love. If you've had a successful film with characters like that, why not make a follow-up?"

Cross-breeding

This year also brings some crossbreeding among movie series: There's the animated "The Rugrats Meet the Wild Thornberrys," and the slasher duel "Freddy Vs. Jason," matching the killers of "A Nightmare on Elm Street" and "Friday the 13th."

On the prequel front are "Gods and Generals," with Robert Duvall in a forerunner to "Gettysburg," "Exorcist: The Beginning," with Stellan Skarsgard as the priest of the horror smash in his first satanic encounter, in Africa; and "When Harold Met Lloyd: Dumb & Dumberer," set in the teen years of the idiot brothers of "Dumb and Dumber."

AP

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKSHELF

Top directors answer pragmatic questions about filmmaking

By Noelani Torre

"MOVIEMAKERS' Master Class: Private Lessons from the World's Foremost Directors" (Faber and Faber) by Laurent Tirard is like a box of expensive chocolates. All 20 interviews collected in this book are like bite-sized chocs to the mind—short and sweet, but incredibly rich.

Series

Tirard, a journalist for the French film magazine "Studio" and himself a filmmaker, conducted these interviews with master directors for a series in the magazine called Leçons de Cinéma ("Cinema Lessons") which ran for four years.

What makes these interviews different and far more fascinating than the usual is the mix of the practical and conceptual in Tirard's questions.

"I had always approached my job [writing for 'Studio'] from a purely journalistic point of view," he explains in the book's preface. "But I realized that I could also approach it as a filmmaker. Instead of asking directors questions they had already been asked a hundred times—questions along the lines of 'So what was it like working with this or that actress? Is she the same in real life as in your film?'—why not ask more pragmatic questions, such as 'How do you decide where to set up the camera for a given shot?' A very basic question, granted—but a crucial one."

Technical

It may sound very technical, but it allows us to see a side of film and filmmaking that we ordinary viewers aren't normally exposed to. And the responses are far from boring.

Instead of "tailoring" the interviews to individual directors, Tirard devised a single set of questions for all, thus making it possible for us to see how distinct each director's approach to moviemaking is. We also discover that some directors are alike in some aspects, though their overall styles may be quite different.

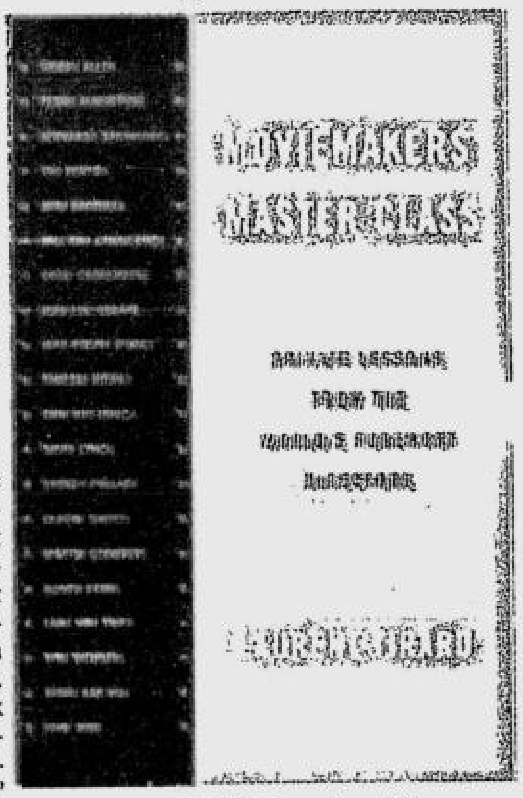
Martin Scorsese, for example, plans his shots well in advance and is very specific about the camera lenses he uses. "I prefer wide-angle lenses," he said. "25 mm and wider." Tim Burton, who unlike Scorsese tries "not to have any preconceived ideas" before arriving on the set, likewise favors wide-angle lenses.

Burton also has something in common with "Amélie" director Jean-Pierre Jeunet —a background in animation, which they both (separately) acknowledge to be good training for young filmmakers.

Personal views

The differences between these directors are apparent not only in their directing styles, but also in their personal views about film and filmmaking. Sydney Pollack thinks that "filmmaking is essentially storytelling," while Japanese director Takeshi Kitano sees film as "a succession of perfect images."

Oliver Stone states unequivocally that a film "is a point of view. The rest is just…scenery." Jean-Luc Godard believes that "real films" are "those where there is something invisible, which can be seen - or discerned — through the visible part, and only because the visible part has been arranged in a certain fashion."



TIRARD interviewed 20 filmmakers for his book.

Tirard groups these disparate directors into general categories — "Groundbreakers," "Revisionists," "Dream Weavers," "Big Guns," "New Blood"—with legendary French auteur Godard set apart as "In a Class By Himself."

"Groundbreakers" are John Boorman, Sydney Pollack, and Claude Sautet—filmmakers who "became auteurs at a time when that notion didn't yet exist." Woody Allen, Bernardo Bertolucci, Martin Scorsese, and Wim Wenders are "Revisionists" whose innovative careers began in the equally inventive '70s.

Pedro Almodóvar, Tim Burton, David Cronenberg, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, and David Lynch are the "Dream Weavers" who have "persistent obsessions" and "striking visual styles."

The two "Big Guns," Oliver Stone and John Woo, are direct opposites, but their decidedly personal approach to making films with "gigantic proportions" are quite similar.

Vanguard

Joel and Ethan Coen, Takeshi Kitano, Emir Kusturica, Lars Von Trier, and Wong Kar-Wai are the "New Blood," filmmakers "considered at the vanguard of filmmaking over the last 10 years."

And last but certainly not least is Jean-Luc Godard, "In a Class By Himself," the oldest of the lot (as a filmmaker) but "possibly the most modern and innovative of them all."

In this book, they reveal their little secrets, technical and otherwise—camera moves, personal visions, theories, techniques in dealing with actors, etc.— that give us a richer and more profound understanding of them as filmmakers, and of their highly individual bodies of work.

Perhaps the knowledge that John Woo listens to internal, "invisible" music when preparing his scenes will deepen our enjoyment of his action films. And we might understand the quality of Bernardo Bertolucci's films better when we know that he tries to dream the next day's shots in advance.

At the very least, we are sure to walk away with a little more cinematic know-how after reading these interviews, and certainly a greater appreciation for the dedicated individuals who make movies for us.

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

Madonna's unlikely relatives—and her unlikelier I.Q.

By Rito P. Asilo

QUESTIONS? Anything about show biz you simply *have* to know? Write or e-mail us at rito_asilo@yahoo.com. As Mulder and Scully say, "The truth is out there," and we will do our best to find it!

Distantly related

Material mom Madonna and anorexic songbird Celine Dion are said to be related. How is this possible? (Question from Rodolfo Bulawan Jr. of Manila)

Answer: American genealogist (someone who traces family trees) William Addams Rietseisner found out that the two pop music divas are indeed distantly related. But there is another celebrity the songbirds can call *kamag-anak*— royal mistress Camilla Parker-Bowles, Prince Charles' paramour!

Madonna and Celine's lineages had been traced back to a man named Zachary Cloutier, who died in 1708. But Rietseisner also found that Bowles' great-grandparents from nine generations ago were ancestors of the two singers.

Camilla and Celine both descended from Jean Guyon, who died in 1694. French-Canadians Cloutier and Guyon lived the last year of their lives in Quebec, Canada.

Heir apparent

"Ocean's Eleven," the 2001 Steven Soderbergh film which starred George Clooney (as Danny Ocean), Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon and Andy Garcia, was a remake of a 1960 action movie. Who portrayed Clooney's character in the original?

Answer: Legendary singer Frank Sinatra.

Meryl's angel as well

This actress launched Meryl Streep's film career when she turned down Streep's character in 1979's "Kramer vs. Kramer" because of scheduling conflicts with her hit TV show. She has four Emmys and four Golden Globes to her name and holds the record for starring in more TV shows than any other woman in history. Who is this actress?

Answer: "Charlie's Angels" original, Kate Jackson.

Not funny enough

Jim Carrey auditioned for the part of the geek in the '80s teen cult hit, "Sixteen Candles," with Molly Ringwald. But the part went to Anthony Michael Hall, who won accolades for the role. Why was Carrey not chosen for the part?

Answer: The casting people didn't find him funny enough!

This lousy actress is a genius

Madonna's performances are panned by critics when she plays leads ("Swept Away;" "The Next Best Thing;" "Body of Evidence"). She works best when she's acting in an ensemble, or playing support ("A League of Their Own;" "Desperately Seeking Susan;" "Dick Tracy"). But this controversial performer is known to have the I.Q. of a genius. How high is it?

Answer: Madonna's IQ is, hold your breath, 140! It must be what husband Guy Ritchie saw in her, huh?

SINATRA AND CLOONEY. Both played Danny Ocean in "Ocean's Eleven."

Jay Llamas remembered

(Conclusion)

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

MARILOU Llamas remembers that, when Jay was a young boy, she could not get angry at him because he was such a happy child. Because her three boys were naughty kids, they were made altar boys at St. Alphonsus di Ligouri in Magallanes, where, many years later, Jay's wake was held.

Wake

Yaya Gina, who had worked for them for 15 years, went to the wake.

So did lady barber Net-Net who cuts their hair, and the caretakers of their fishpond in Kabangkalan City.

The Aquila Legis' necrological service was most touching, with 300 members present. There were many who came night after night.

The Llamas family is religious, Jay prayed the rosary and had three *stampitas* in his wallet. The last book he read was "Political Spirituality" by Fr. Ruben Tanseco, S.J.

LLAMAS. Loving son.

Population

The last conversation Marilou remembers having with her son was about the increase in the population of the Philippines: "Hey, Jay, there are 80 million Filipinos, can't they think of something to control the population?" Jay humored his mom: "I thought you were a Catholic?" and then nudged his girlfriend Sid. Jay was a loving son; his mom always came first.

Our AFFAP sisterhood bonded more during those trying days for Marilou, whose son was shot senselessly —road rage that brought so much pain. Remy Milan-De Las Alas, her batchmate in PAL training, was always with her.

(Contact Mandy at 522-5185 or 89 and 5221905 or CF 0916-7060-130.)

Love blooms for Brittany, Ashton on the set of their romantic comedy

By Anthony Breznican

BURBANK, California—The real-life love between Brittany Murphy and her "Just Married" co-star Ashton Kutcher began with a squabble.

The clash evolved into a crush between Murphy, who played Eminem's girlfriend in "8 Mile," and Kutcher, best known as blockheaded Kelso on the Fox broadcasting network sitcom "That '70s Show."

Argument

"We got into an argument during the first rehearsal and I've never argued with anyone in rehearsal before in my whole life," Murphy gushed during an interview at NBC studios after an appearance on "The Tonight Show."

Wearing jeans, stiletto heels, and a black blazer over a white tank-top, Murphy laughs loud and easily, dismissing the long-ago disagreement as "just a bicker. I don't even remember why, it was that silly."

Kutcher, interviewed later, tells it like this: "We had this big blowout fight. She hated me. I hated her. It was a straight-up argument. But we both apologized to each other later."

Honeymooning couple

Murphy said sharing most of the movie as a honeymooning couple who can't stop arguing helped them become "buddies"—but nothing more, at first.

"I had a broken heart when we first met and he was in a very serious relationship with a lovely young woman, but we just clicked and had a great time filming," the 25-year-old actress said. "Then I went away to do a film, he went away to do a film and it was about (two months ago) when we looked at each other and thought, 'OK, this is something . . .'"

Since then, the couple has appeared together in a tango-like dance sequence last month at the VH1 cable TV's "Big in 2002 Awards" and recently co-hosted the MTV cable TV's New Year's Eve "Pajama Party" from Times Square.

Murphy said she isn't worried about the public attention affecting their romance.

"Just because people are paying more attention, I don't think you should change your behavior because that perhaps could put a larger strain on the relationship," she said.

The petite blond actress, known for her pouty lips, squeaky-scratchy voice and wide eyes sometimes ringed by dark circles, has seen her popularity soar since the blockbuster debut of "8 Mile."

"That changed a lot," she said. "That was the difference between people knowing my first and last name as opposed to not."

Two other films

Murphy has completed work on two other films, playing a drug-addicted stripper in "Spun" and a kindly nanny in "Molly Gunn," and hopes her budding popularity will help jump-start a few personal projects, such as a Janis Joplin biopic she was hired to star in before the project fell apart over music rights.

Meanwhile, she plans to take time off from film work to develop a singing career—although she won't say what kind of music. "It'll be a surprise," she said.

Despite rumors she and Eminem dated while filming "8 Mile," she has described him as a close friend whose privacy she tries to respect. "During our first day of hair and make-up for a screen test in Detroit, there was a book about him on the counter and I opened it up and then closed it and decided not to read it," she said. "I realized, 'OK, if there is anything in his life he wants to tell me, he'll tell me as I get to know him.'"

"Just Married" gives Murphy a chance to play a lighter role, akin to her breakthrough performance as the makeover project in "Clueless" and her vocal work as quavery-voiced cousin Luanne Platter in the Fox cartoon sitcom "King of the Hill."

In recent years, she has co-starred as a suicidal woman obsessed with cooked chicken in "Girl, Interrupted," and played a wannabe model eager to escape the streets of Detroit in "8 Mile," while the thriller "Don't Say a Word" featured her as a secretive, near-catatonic abuse victim.

Instinctive

"I was never trained in acting, never trained in singing, only dance," she said, adding that most of her performances are instinctive. "The characters basically take over and use my emotions where they need to, if that makes any sense."

Born in Atlanta, Murphy was raised there for two years by her single mother before they moved to Edison, New Jersey, to live closer to family. Sharon Murphy worked as a saleswoman to support her daughter and encouraged her fascination with performing.

As a youngster, Murphy said she fantasized about making movies with her dolls or being a cast member on "Saturday Night Live." After appearing in school and local theater productions, she began to audition for commercials.

Ads for candy, pizza restaurants and board games led her to move to Los Angeles, where she played small roles on short-lived sitcoms before her breakthrough in 1995's "Clueless."

Murphy credits her mother's support for her career success.

"When I asked my mom to move to California, she sold everything and moved out here for me," Murphy said. "I was really grateful to have grown up in an environment that was conducive to creating and didn't stifle any of that. She always believed in me." *AP*

MURPHY AND KUTCHER. Had a "big blowout fight' before they fell madly in love.

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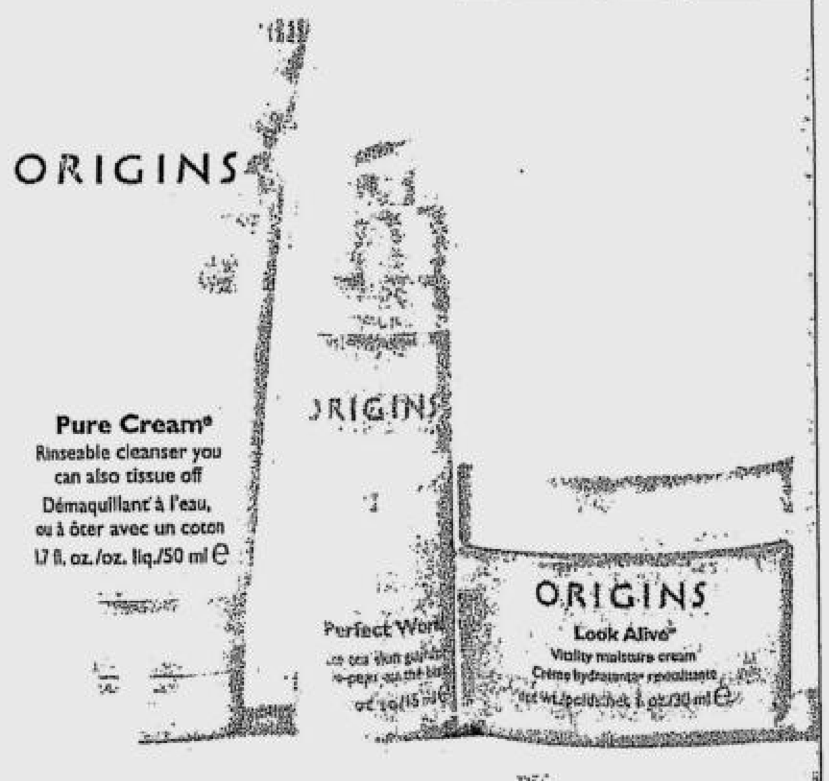
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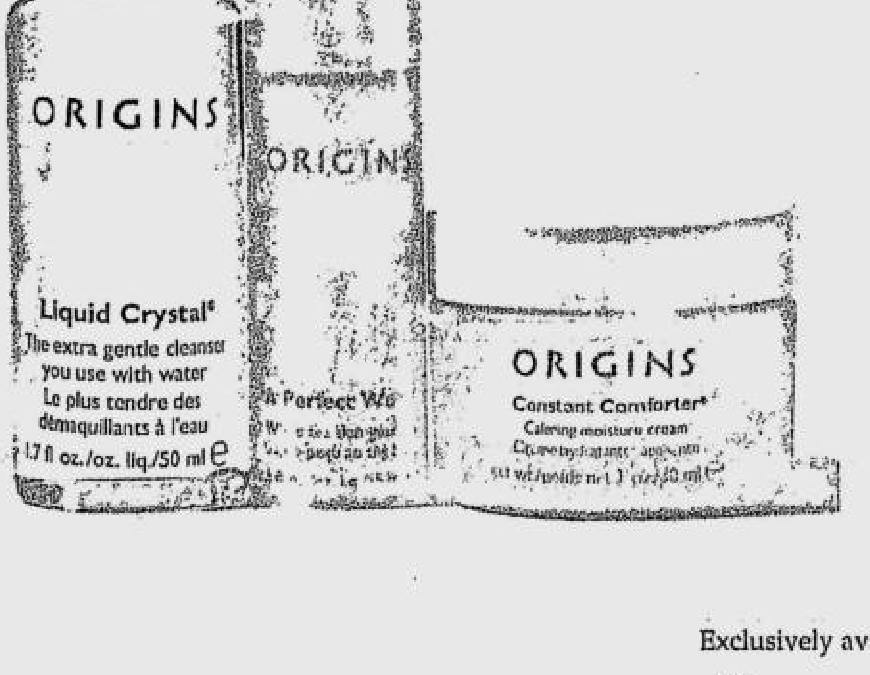
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'Chicago' and 'Gangs' lead British Academy nods

By Matt Wolf

LONDON—In what looks like a dry run for the Oscar nominations to come next month, the musical "Chicago" and director Martin Scorsese's violent epic "Gangs of New York" led the field Monday with 12 nominations each for the Orange British Academy Film Awards, otherwise known as the Baftas.

11 nominations

Following close behind with 11 nominations was "The Hours," the Anglo-American adaptation by English director Stephen Daldry of American writer Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer-Prize winning novel. The same film was recently named best motion picture (drama) at the Golden Globes in the United States.

The three films will compete as the year's best with "The Lord of the Rings: the Two Towers," which got nine nominations, and Roman Polanski's deeply personal Holocaust-themed "The Pianist," which got seven Bafta citations.

The winners will be announced Feb. 23, exactly a month before the Oscars. Nominations for the Oscars will be announced Feb. 11 in Los Angeles.

Departure

The directors of the above five films were all nominated for best director in a departure from past eccentricity in the Bafta lists. A noticeable omission from both best film and best director were "The Road To Perdition" and the Englishman, Sam Mendes, who made it.

Mendes' film did score a nomination for supporting actor Paul Newman, who faces stiff competition from Chris Cooper ("Adaptation"), Ed Harris ("The Hours"), Alfred Molina ("Frida"), and Christopher Walken ("Catch Me If You Can").

RENEE Zellweger does her Marilyn Monroe turn in "Chicago."

The best actor prize pits two Britons—Sir Michael Caine, for "The Quiet American," and Daniel Day-Lewis, making an overdue comeback with "Gangs of New York"—against Nicolas Cage ("Adaptation"), Adrien Brody ("The Pianist"), and Oscar favorite Jack Nicholson ("About Schmidt"). The same quintet could well feature at the Oscars.

Last year's Oscar-winning best actress, Halle Berry in "Monster's Ball," is a Bafta nominee this year. She goes head to head with Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman, both for "The Hours," as well as Salma Hayek ("Frida") and Renee Zellweger ("Chicago"). Unmentioned were two of the most acclaimed female performances of the year—Maggie Gyllenhaal in "Secretary" and Diane Lane in "Unfaithful."

Essential part

In the past, the Baftas followed the Academy Awards. But as of last year they have preceded the Oscars, making the British Academy ceremony an essential part of the pre-Oscar sequence of prizes that includes the Golden Globes.

Though films in the United States must play commercially during a given calendar year to qualify for Oscar consideration, the Bafta selection depends instead on a series of screenings for Bafta voters, often attended by the creative talent from that particular movie. "The Hours," for instance, doesn't open in Britain until Feb. 14.

In a nod to the Baftas' British origins, there is a separate category for outstanding British film of the year. That lineup includes, yet again, "The Hours," as well as "Bend It Like Beckham," "Dirty Pretty Things," "The Magdalene Sisters," and "The Warrior."

The foreign-language film category includes several films that are hoping for far broader acknowledgment at the Oscars, the Mexican movie "Y Tu Mama Tambien" ("And Your Mother Too") and Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar's "Hable con Ella" ("Talk To Her") among them.

The Baftas are sponsored by Orange, the mobile phone company. A separate ceremony honors the previous year in British television. *AP*

DIRECTOR Maryo de los Reyes (center) with Jiro Manio (left) and Joseph Roble.

We need to see 'Magnifico' more than we know

By Ramon Bayron

COME Feb. 12, we will once again be offered the usual romantic love stories to celebrate Valentine's week. The formula of "boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl-back" is so predictable that the only real difference would be in who are playing the lead roles.

Real meaning

But if you take the real meaning of the celebration by heart, and would welcome the reassurance that true love is still possible in these hardened times, *the* movie to see is "Magnifico."

You may not have heard much about the movie due to lack of promotions, but "Magnifico" could very be what we need most right now: a generous serving of courage, confidence, hope, faith and love.

Insights

With its affecting insights into our flaws as human beings pitted against our inherent capacity to survive and achieve fulfillment in life, "Magnifico" is one of the few Filipino films that celebrate and take pride in our uniqueness as a people *and* our commonality with the rest of the world.

"Magnifico" had a special preview at the Cultural Center of the Philippines last Jan. 25. Its director, Maryo J. de los Reyes, moved the audience to actively promote the film among friends and family members when he said, "*Mahirap magbenta ng kabutihan ngayon.*"

Goodness personified

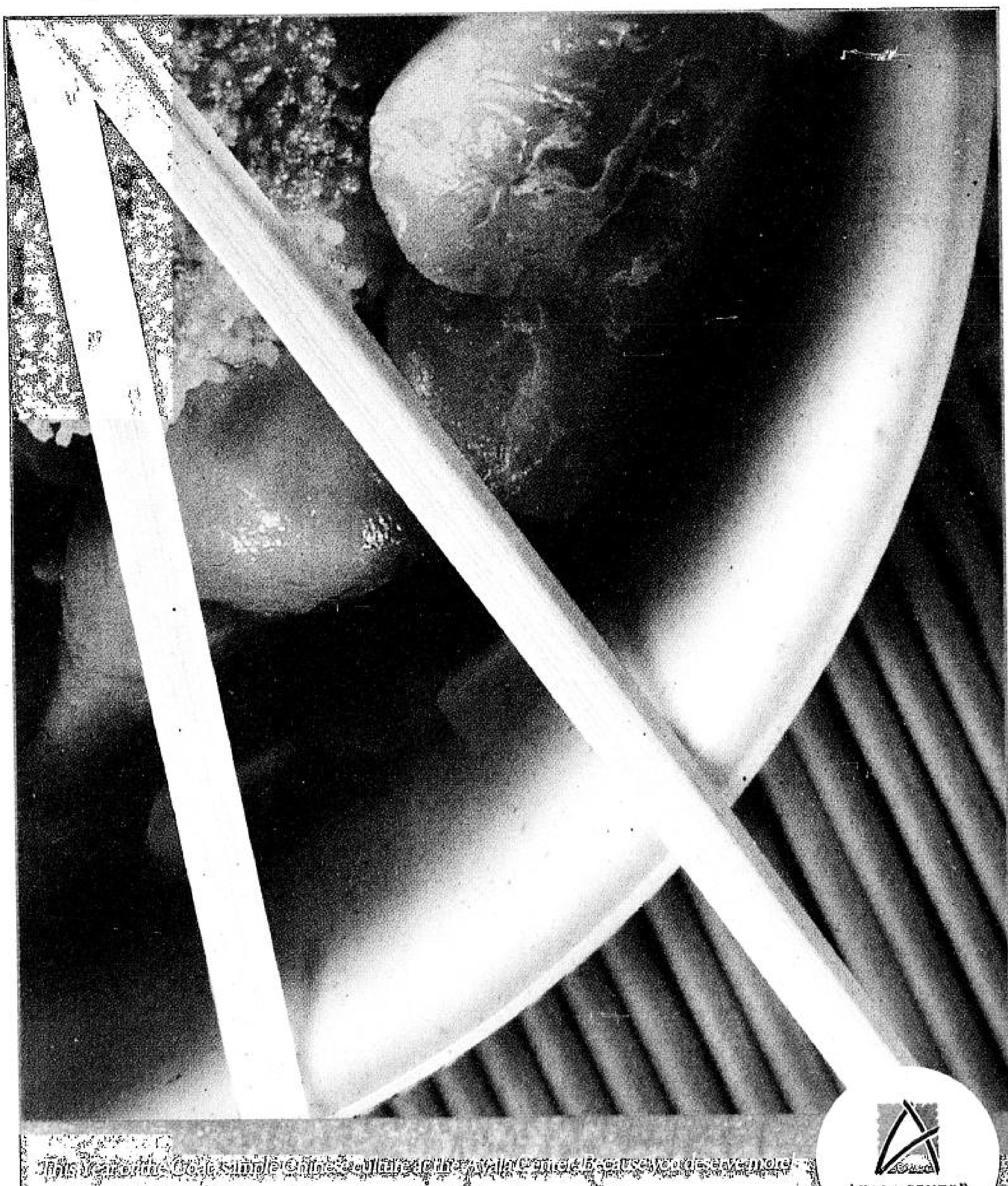
And "Magnifico," the film and its title character, is goodness personified. That this goodness is now a problem speaks volumes about where established entertainment has brought us. Let's pray that "Magnifico" won't suffer the fate that most show biz insiders have prejudged for it.

Good thing that GMA Films agreed to release the film, so it's getting spot promotions on the network's shows. Still, much is left to be desired and "Magnifico" may have to depend on the less expensive print media to tell the people of its virtues, and that it is showing on the 12th of February.

Contribution

This writer is not ashamed to admit that this article is my own contribution towards that end. Then, it's the turn of our all-important "word-of-mouth" publicity to give this film its much-needed "legs."

Hopefully, if "Magnifico" succeeds in staying in theaters for a second week, enough awareness and interest shall have been generated to entice more moviegoers to see what I believe to be Philippine cinema's latest classic.



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Zong offers yummy treats for the heart and tummy

By Rito P. Asilo

CHECKING out the street market at Policarpio st. in Mandaluyong with your friends is a good way to enjoy yourself. But what could be better than capping a fun day with Chinese dinner and live entertainment, especially if the locale is the idyllic art-and-restaurant strip called The Fort, with its Mediterranean ambience and traffic-free streets?

Charms

We wonder why the night-out clientele of Libis and Katipunan has not really caught up with the charms of the place. But when we got there, Zong Specialty Chinese Cuisine Restaurant, which was marking its opening with a concert titled "A Christmas Zong," was already swarming with people—and it wasn't even 9 p.m. yet, on a Wednesday evening at that!

The biggest hurdle was getting through what the word "zong" meant. Is it Mandarin for song? An adjective for lightning? A speed equivalent? Not really. Zong, as talent manager Bibsy Carballo explains to us, is a semi-precious stone in the jade family that means "good luck." So there.

Apart from a poorly coordinated staff that shoved us in three places before we finally settled into our seats, the experience proved pleasant. If you are partial to siomai, siopao and lumpia, you will love spending family dinners and romantic dates here.

We couldn't get enough of the pork dumpling! Just the right tummy-filler before listening to tunes dished out (no pun intended) by the UST Symphony Orchestra led by Prof. Herminigildo Ranera, classically-trained Ramon Acoymo, promising newcomer Mish Ballesca, the all-male vocal ensemble Hiraya, and pop chanteuse Anna Fegi. Now, if only they checked those buzzing microphones, which were unnerving...

More than the performances, we enjoyed the line-up of songs, which included a medley of timeless carols, and a beautifully executed but abridged tune from Carl Orff's 1936 scenic cantata, "Carmina Burana."

For a newcomer, Ballesca created an impression, although she sometimes looked ill-at-ease in front of an audience. She did have a presence that a little bit more confidence can further polish.

Though still rough around the edges, she delivered pleasing interpretations of the Kuh Ledesma original, "Nagdaang Pasko" and Mandy Moore's semi-religious "Only Hope" (which we last heard sung locally when we dropped by Sheila Francisco's recent gig at the Promenade at Crossroad 77 in Quezon City), the hypnotic tune culled from the popular tearjerker, "A Walk to Remember."

(Incidentally, on Sheila's show, she sang the show-stopping "Bali-Hai," from her London triumph as Bloody Mary in "South Pacific"—a real treat!).

One note for the new singer, though: it's always better to memorize the song you're going to perform if you don't know how to wing it when you lose a line from the lyric sheet you're reading.

Ramon Acoymo gave "Silent Night" a German spin before he segued to English. He was said to have performed in a production of "The Flower Drum Song" in the US, so that piqued our curiosity to hear if he also had the musical theater sound other than the operatic style he's known for.

Ensemble

For their part, the guys of Hiraya, an all-male vocal group of nine-to-fivers who formed the ensemble to quench their thirst for performing, sang "Pasko Na, Sinta Ko" and "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," among others.

Beautiful mix of masculine voices there, but if we heard it right, there was no "higher voice" in their harmony when there should have been. Also, if they want to keep doing this, the boys need to do something about their act because they looked a bit stiff on stage.

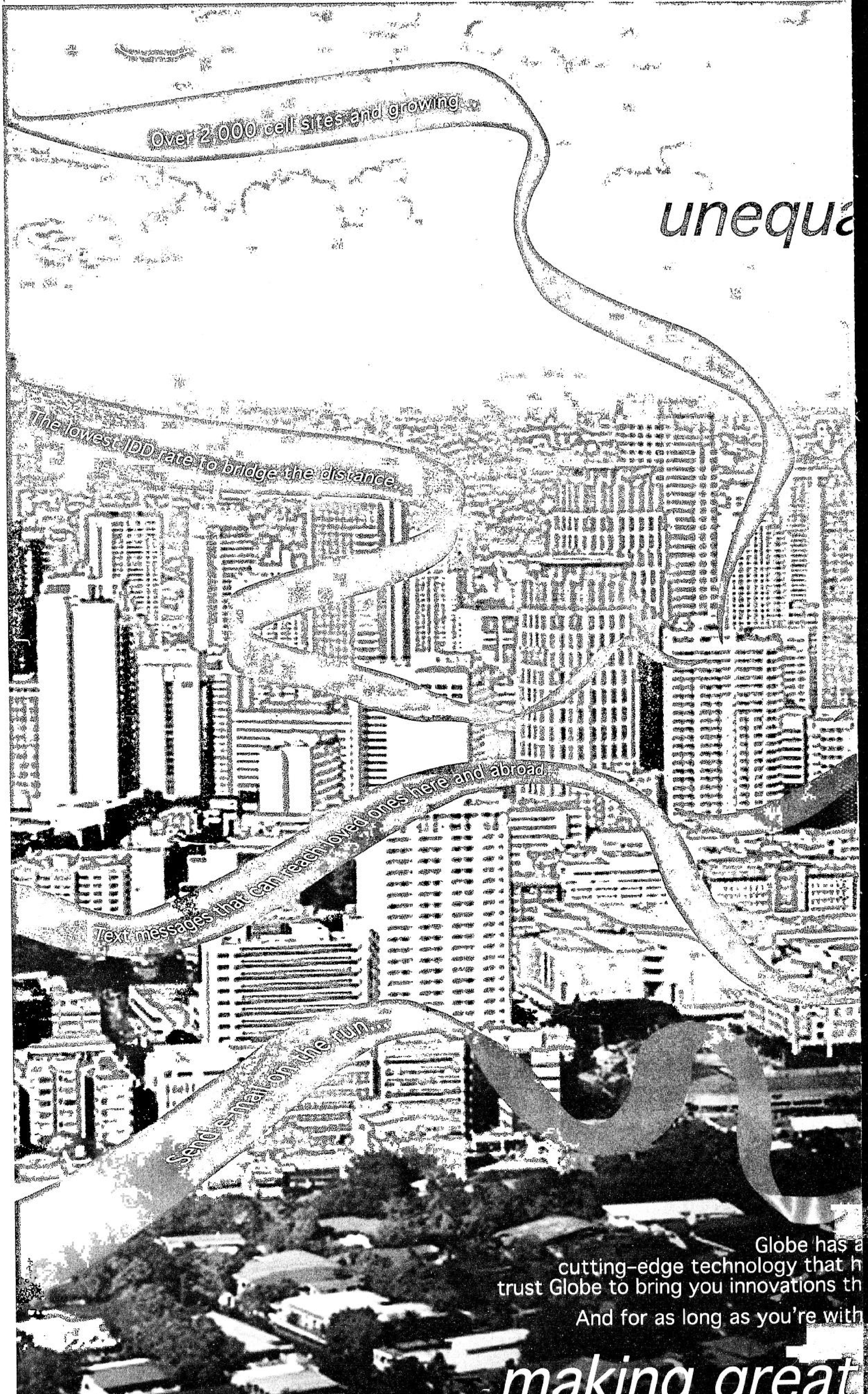
What we were really looking forward to was to watch Anna perform. Obviously, the singer's busy year has given her the verve and confidence that only experience can develop. In seven songs, the young performer showed her range and vocal pizzazz with ease.

Of course, interpretation comes with maturity. It was a bit off-putting to see no eye contact between Anna and Ramon when they sang a very difficult, albeit engaging, song like David Foster and Carole Bayer-Sager's "The Prayer."

But this fearless Cebuana sure knew how to wow her audience! And what we loved even better about her was her choice of songs: crowd-pleasers like "Someone Like You" (from "Jekyll and Hyde"), Josh Groban's "To Where You Are," "The Christmas Song," and a delightful Christmas jingle we first heard from the eternally playful Madonna, "Santa Baby."

If anything, Anna proves that she is also mindful that not all people prefer contest-piece songs all the time. Another pleasant surprise was when Anna jammed with Hiraya on the Dingdong Avanzado original, "Maghihintay Sa 'Yo," where she showed that her classical placement was just as solid as her belting chest tones. This girl will surely go a long way.

No matter where, no matter when,
no matter what, Globe remains...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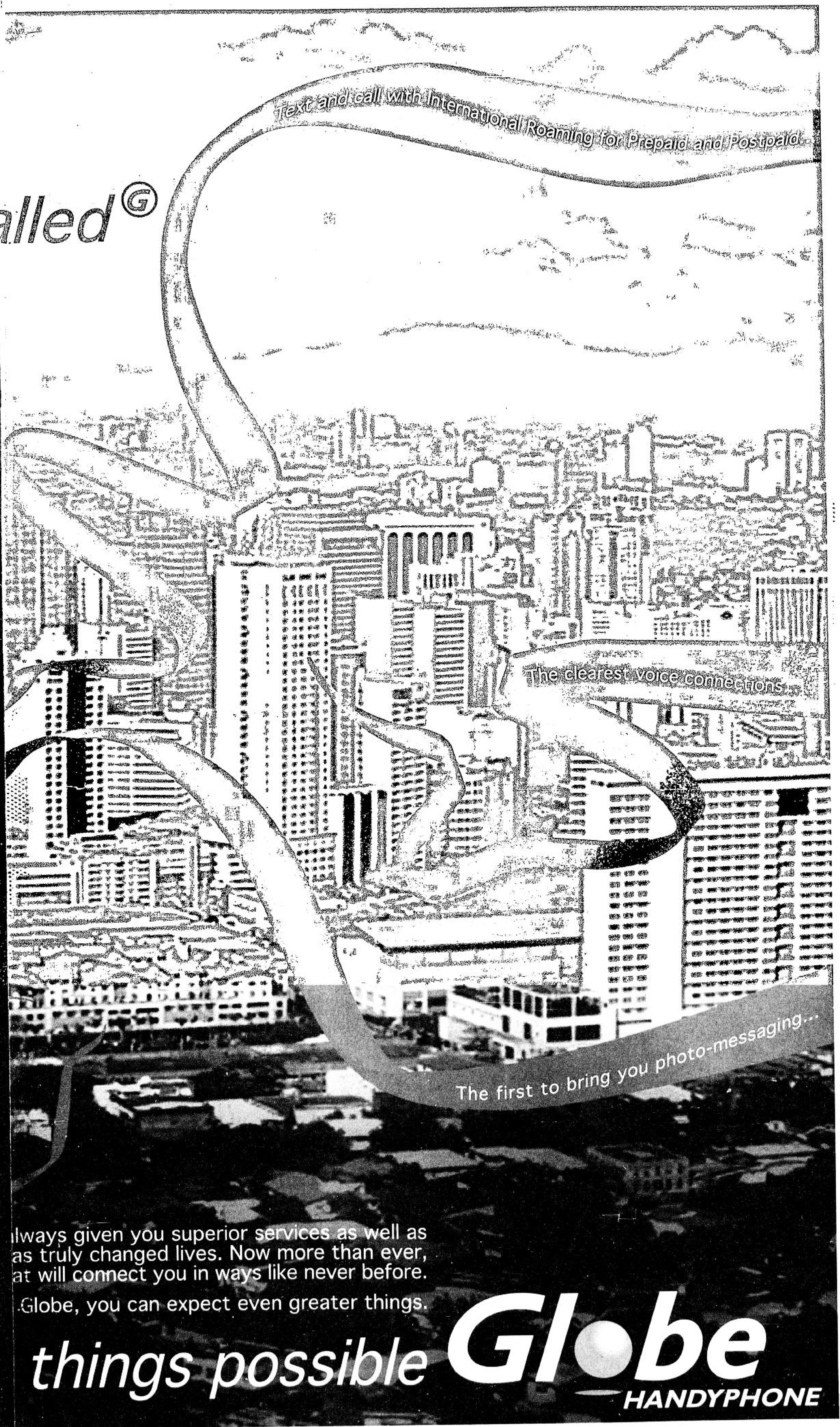
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Special pilgrimage for disabled set

By Nestor U. Torre

WE first met Arlina Onglao during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land that she organized two years ago for devotees including entertainment people like Tintin Bersola, Julius Babao and Jeanne Young.

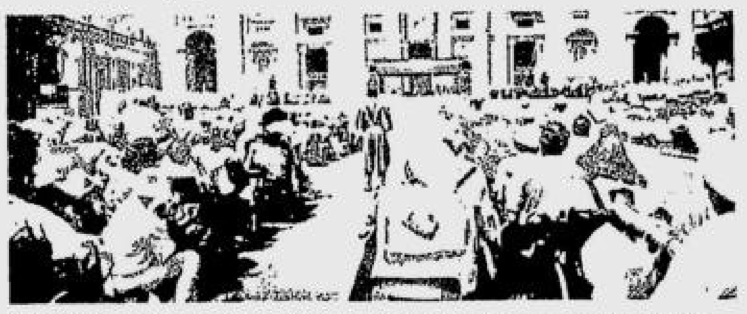
Deep commitment

We were struck not just by her efficiency and knack for problem-solving on the run, but especially by her deep commitment to using travel to enhance people's faith.

Arlina was happy to provide this service for pilgrims several times each year, not just to Israel but also to holy sites in Europe and elsewhere. But, as she conducted the spiritual tours, she noticed that a few pilgrims were having a difficult time or were being left behind because they were disabled.

She sensed that this was because the tours had been organized for people who had no physical disability, and thus could cope with a full schedule that required them to visit several sites in one day, get on and off buses in a hurry, be on the go from morning till night, etc.

ONGLAO (left) with members of one of her 2002 pilgrimage groups, including some pilgrims on wheelchairs.



DEVOTEES on wheelchairs praying before a papal audience at the Vatican.

Crying need

Arlina recalls, "As I watched the disabled pilgrims having such a hard time, I realized that there was a crying need for a pilgrimage specifically structured to allow for disabled people's physical limitations.

"Indeed, they have a special need to go on pilgrimage because they are looking for the spiritual consolation and 'rejuvenation' that visits to holy sites can provide."

Thus, Arlina decided that the next pilgrimage offered by her company, Journeys of Faith (Catholic pilgrimages and cruises), would be especially suited to the disabled and their accompanying relatives and caregivers.

Major basilicas

That special pilgrimage to Europe, "Have Wheelchair, Will Travel," leaves Via Air France on May 18 for Rome. It includes a visit to the Divina Amore pilgrimage site and the major basilicas in Rome.

On May 21, the pilgrims will join the Papal Audience at St. Peter's Square, then leave for San Giovanni Rotondo, where Saint Padre Pio lived and died. Among other activities, there will be a visit to the Hospital for the Relief of the Suffering that the saint himself put up.

May 23 takes the group to Lanciano, the site of the first known Eucharistic miracle, then on to Loreto to view the Holy House of Mary. Other visits are to Pisa and Nice.

Marian procession

On May 25, the pilgrims travel to Lourdes and join the celebrated Marian procession there. There is a guided visit to the shrines of Lourdes, one of the greatest Marian pilgrimage and healing sites in Europe.

May 27, the group proceeds to Burgos, then on to Fatima, for an extended visit to the Chapel of the Apparitions, the Basilica, Valinhos, etc.

May 31, on to Santarem and the Church of the Holy Miracle, another celebrated Eucharistic site, followed by an evening flight to Paris.

Activities

Activities in Paris include visits to the Miraculous Medal at Rue de Bac, Notre Dame Cathedral and Sacre Coeur. The group flies back to Manila on June 1. Call 929-0155 and 929-0144, telefax 426-0601 or email journeys@info.com.ph.

While the pilgrimage covers a number of significant sites, Arlina observes that it will be paced more slowly and the disabled pilgrims' special needs will be anticipated. The chaplain is Fr. Florante Marcelo, and the pilgrimage is for the benefit of St. John Mary Vianney Seminary.

Arlina has been conducting pilgrimages for many years but she says that she is most excited about "Have Wheelchair, Will Travel," because it seeks to help people who don't usually get to go on pilgrimage due to advanced age or physical disability. "It's both a challenge and an inspiration!" she shares.

'The Hours' distinguished by cohesive narrative

By Christy Lemire

NEW YORK—"The Hours" stars Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore and Meryl Streep. But just as much a star behind the scenes is director Stephen Daldry, who seamlessly weaves the actresses' stories, across three eras in three cities, into a cohesive narrative.

Mystique

Part of the film's mystique is that no one thought it could be done. Adapting Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Hours" seemed a daunting task; the 1998 novel, about three woman with ties to Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway," was too internal, too difficult to depict on screen.

The three actresses bring the heroines vividly to life; Kidman and Streep already have received Golden Globe nominations, and Academy Award nods are sure to follow. But Daldry's direction, coupled with Peter Boyle's editing, truly make us feel as if we're watching three facets of the same woman.

They do it with subtle nuances: Streep's character, Clarissa, sits before a mirror and twists her hair back, then Kidman, as Virginia Woolf some 80 years earlier, finishes twisting her hair back and holds it with a clip. This may sound too cutesy and self-aware, and at times it is, but the transitions are always smooth and elegant.

Giant leaps

And with David Hare's screenplay, they do it with giant leaps through time and space.

Daldry, who received an Oscar nomination for 2000's "Billy Elliot," follows the three characters during one day of their lives. In 1923, Virginia begins writing "Mrs. Dalloway" in suburban London. In 1951, pregnant Los Angeles housewife Laura (Moore) reads the novel. And in 2001, New York book editor Clarissa—the first name of Mrs. Dalloway—is a modern incarnation of the character, planning a party for her ex-lover, Richard (Ed Harris), who's dying of AIDS.

KIDMAN. Moment of clarity.

Introspective

Each woman is introspective, alone even when surrounded by friends. Each woman's story features a suicide, or at least an attempt. Each woman engages in a sapphic kiss. And each woman, after some sort of cathartic breakdown, achieves a moment of clarity.

The deeper ways in which their lives are intertwined are revealed toward the end, and you won't see them coming if you haven't read the book. Even if you have, it's hard not to get lost in the performances from three actresses at the height of their talents. *AP*

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London's West End offers a variety of musical treats

Conclusion

By Rito P. Asilo

THE SONGS in "Phantom of the Opera" are perfect for its story. The people seated beside us couldn't help but sing along with the familiar world-famous tunes ("All I Ask of You," "Music of the Night," "Masquerade," "Think of Me") while we valiantly held our tears for the pain that the Phantom felt when Christine abandoned him.

Opulent scenes

We had a sad walk home after the show, with the opulent scenes of underwater caves, eerie lake, crashing chandeliers, the grieving moans of the Phantom and the songs of longing lingering in our head.

But if "Phantom" leaves you teary-eyed, you'll cry buckets while watching Cameron Mackintosh's 17-year-old extravaganza of Victor Hugo's unforgettable tale of the French Revolution, "Les Miserables."

We hate it when productions engage in treacherous "emotional blackmail." In this case, it is a matter of indulging in a guilty pleasure. This is one musical to just sit back, enjoy and cry copious tears to. No wonder it is the world's most popular musical.

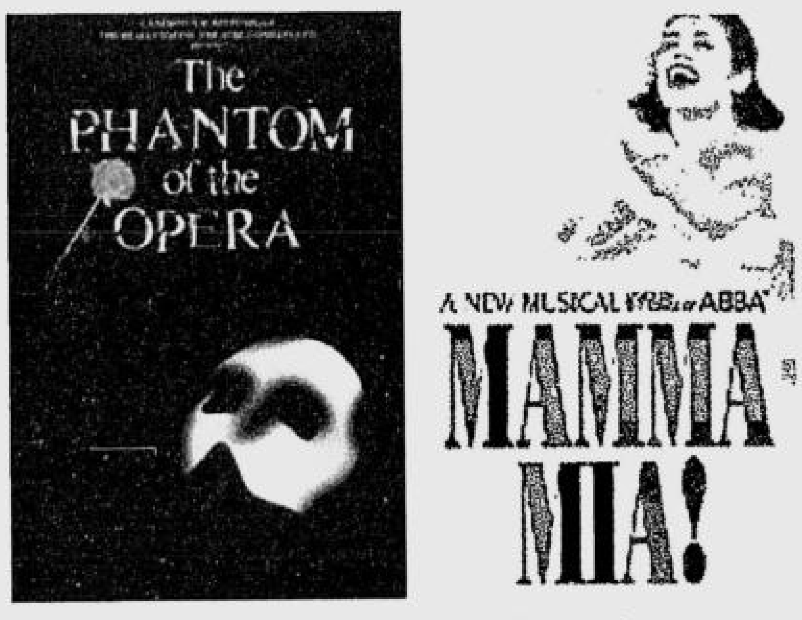
But our tears backed up a bit and wanted to seep back to their lachrymal ducts when, at the end of "Bring Him Home," Valjean's (Michael Sterling) voice cracked. But with songs like "On My Own," "I Dreamed A Dream," "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" and "A Little Fall of Rain," how can you resist this show?

Jobless steelworkers

"The Full Monty" will not make you cry. Well, maybe during the song, "You Walk With Me." But you can't resist loving it, either. Terrence McNally and Jack O'Brien successfully translate the acclaimed movie hit into a winsome stage spectacle about jobless steelworkers forced to turn to stripping—*a la* Chippendales—out of necessity.

Your heart sinks at first as the show kicks off with a woman egging a male stripper on to strut his stuff, fearing the scene is going to degenerate into a strip show—but, thankfully, it doesn't, it just gets better and better.

This is really a musical on human values, on regular Joes who triumph over adversities. It is easy to exploit material like this because of its focus on nudity. But it features tuneful songs, deceptively simple but ingeniously realized choreography (notably during "Michael Jordan's Ball") and very spirited performances, led by heartthrob Ben Richards (in the Robert Carlysle character).



"PHANTOM" is a 17-year-old hit; "Mamma Mia" is a much more recent sensation.

Do they really do the "full monty"? We're not telling.

What we can tell you, though, is that you will have a grand time watching "Mamma Mia," a delectable excuse to parade Abba's tuneful songs. Call it "My Big, Happy, Unapologetically Confusing, Musical Greek Wedding."

Decadent era

The story is not about the '70s pop foursome, nor is it about a nostalgic retrospective on that decadent era.

It's set in the present, on a tiny Greek island. Sophie, the daughter of an English expat and former girl power singer Donna, is about to get married. But her dream is for her father to walk her down the aisle. The problem is that neither she nor her mother knows exactly who her father is.

Reading through her mother's diary, she narrows the "suspects" down to three and invites them to her wedding. And all hell breaks mirthfully loose!

The plot may be skimpy but it's ingeniously woven together to weave a coherent story around Abba's hits: "The Winner Takes It All," "Money Money Money," "Dancing Queen," "Chiquitita," "I Have A Dream," "Voulez-vous," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "Super Trouper," etc.

You wonder when the next familiar tune will come. You just want to sing along, dance and cheer (as did the Japanese teenagers sitting in front of us)! Who knew that these dance tunes would adapt so well onstage? But they did, and how!

While not a musical, the last production we caught in London, albeit on DVD (the run had already ended), certainly interested us. Is this the "penile" answer to the massively successful "The Vagina Monologues" (which was still running in London when we were there), the Obie-winning show on women's issues?

Attitudes

We didn't really catch Richard Herring's "Talking Cock," an acclaimed Edinburgh show on men's (and women's) attitudes towards the penis, based on thousands of completed questionnaires, because our schedule didn't allow us. What we did see was Simon Morly and David Friend's "The Puppetry of the Penis."

As the creators suggest, "If Eve Ensler tries to demystify the vagina through words, in the form of heart-tugging and empowering monologues, the duo does the same for male genitalia. But in a more outlandish manner they call "the ancient art of genital origami."

The good news is, the show is non-sexual—they simply transform their genitalia into things like, as the title suggests, puppets. We will never see male genitalia the same way again, that's for sure.

Ben Affleck plays superhero

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"DAREDEVIL" is an action-adventure production that casts Ben Affleck as a superhero for the first time in his movie career.

His top nemesis is Bullseye, a psychotic and ruthless assassin played by Colin Farrell.

Bullseye is blessed with perfect aim. His signature weapons are metal throwing stars, but he's equally deadly with any object, be it pencil, paper clip or playing card.

For his next victim, he has targeted a man who's the father of Elektra Natchios (Jennifer Garner), who turns out to be the Daredevil's girlfriend, so the eventual confrontation between the superhero and the super villain is assured.

'Travel Time' goes to Ibajay

At 6 p.m. today on Studio 23, "Travel Time" takes viewers to the Ati-Atihan of the Sto. Niño in Ibajay, Aklan, 40 minutes away from Kalibo.

Program host-producer Susan Calo Medina shares that Ibajay's celebration is held one week after Kalibo's, and is more religious in orientation.

Saturday afternoon, the image of the Santo Niño is moved from the convent to the church. There's a lot of dancing because it's believed that the Niño won't move without music and movement.

The townsfolk bring food offerings with them and dance inside the church. Unlike Kalibo's version, which has many Niños, only one is venerated in Ibajay, and this serves to give the celebration its devotional focus.

The following day, the Niño is taken around the town, then back to the church, where it's removed from its *caro*. There's a lot of shouting and merrymaking.

There are some tourists present, but this isn't regarded as a tourist event. It's more of a hometown celebration for the townsfolk, a religious fiesta. The good people of Ibajay are determined to resists all blandishments to turn it into a commercial enterprise.—Great!

"Travel Time" is also seen on the Filipino Channel, which reaches the United States and the Middle East.

Welcome back, Richard Tann

Balladeer Richard Tann returned to the music scene after an absence of 10 years, in the successful concert "It Just Had to Be New Year's Eve."

Richard had as guests Jackie Magno and Pat Castillo, colleagues in the Circus Band, as well as master composer and songwriter Willy Cruz. The concert also integrated a fashion segment which presented a 2003 fashion forecast by the Young Designers Guild, and Australian brands under Chocolate.

Happy 2003 for Barangay Vergara kids

It was a happy occasion for the street children of Barangay Vergara, Mandaluyong, when SNACK Arts and Samahang Alige treated them during the holidays at Riverside Park, a junkyard turned park.

Led by Ronald McDonald, Boots Anson-Roa, Lara Fabregas, Anna Fegi, Bayang Barrios, Alma Concepcion, Ces Quesada, Jack Borlaza and celebrity friends Angelu de Leon, Ivy Violan, model Jonas Gruet and Jeanne Young, celebrities entertained the kids with games, gift-giving, and performances. Capping the event was McDonald's distribution of party hats, balloons, toys and snacks.

A tradition started by journalist and artists' manager Bibsy Carballo 14 years ago, the affair was made possible through the help of McDonalds, Purefoods, SM Foundation, Merriam & Webster Bookstore, Speed Detergent Bar, Lampara Books, Mommy Academy, and the invaluable assistance of Peter Sing, Barangay chairperson Lily de la Cruz, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, and Ruperto Tan, who have been supporting Samahang Alige.

Movies on TV

ON the HBO channel: Saturday, Feb. 1 at 5:30 p.m., "Roxanne." 12:05 a.m., "What Planet Are You From?" Sunday, Feb. 2 at 6 a.m., "The Age of Innocence."

Monday, Feb. 3 at 11 p.m., "Spies Like Us." Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 1:15 p.m., "The Running Man." 8:15 p.m., "Evolution."

Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 9 p.m., "Miss Congeniality." 11 p.m., "Pay It Forward." 1:05 a.m., "Cats and Dogs."

On the Cinemax channel: Saturday, Feb. 1 at 6:30 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Snap Shot." 7 a.m., "The Deep." 1:40 a.m., "The Guns of Navarone." 4:15 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Crash Course."

Sunday, Feb. 2 at 8 a.m., "Black Moon Rising." 4:15 p.m., "The Secret of My Success." 3 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Great Ball of Fire." Monday, Feb. 3 at 6 p.m., "Where Are My Children?" 3:15 a.m., "It Happened One Night."

Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 11:15 a.m., "The Guns of Navarone." 1:45 a.m., "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier." Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 2:30 p.m., "Picking Up the Pieces."

Ogie in Viva comedy

Fans of Ogie Alcasid will be pleased to know that he's in the cast of Viva's new comedy, "A.B. Normal College," where he plays a seminarian. Ogie's comedic skill has been honed on the "Bubble Gang" gag show on Channel 7, but there's nothing like the big movie screen to encourage a comedian to stretch his wings.

"A.B. Normal College" stars Rufa Mae Quinto, Mikey Arroyo, Rico J. Puno and Patricia Javier, and is directed by Al Tantay.

'Apocalypse'

"Apocalypse," the Battle of the Bands 2003, will be held on Feb. 21. Up to P30,000 worth of prizes will be awarded. The event is sponsored by the UPLB Microbiological Society.

Participating bands should have at least seven members. Call Mash at mobile number 0920-745-5258, or drop by the Microsoc *tambayan* at Wing C Biosci bldg., UP Los Baños.

ZIYI. Plays key role in Zhang Yimou's latest film.

'Hero' premiere

Zhang Yimou's acclaimed film, "Hero," will be premiered today at 7:30 p.m. at SM Megamall's Cinema 10. The premiere is sponsored by the Anvil Executive Club, which promotes the Confucian ideal of self-sacrifice for the common good and national welfare.

At the premiere, the club will announce its national search for nominees to its first annual Anvil Prize for Courage in Public Service.

"Hero" topbills, Jet Li, Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung, Donnie Yen and Zhang Ziyi.

Cogent arguments

Last Jan. 20, we went to the Senate building to cover the rally led by members of the entertainment industry against the additional 10 percent VAT. Some industry leaders weren't around, but the presence of top guns like Fernando Poe, Jr. and Dolphy made up for the no-shows.

Many people spoke to the crowd, stressing the need for the general public to join show biz folk, doctors and other professionals in their protest, because the onerous effects of the tax could be passed on to them.

AFFLECK. Stars in "Daredevil."

In addition, it was observed that show biz was already heavily taxed, so no new burden should be imposed on it. A third major point was the need to look for alternative ways to raise more money for the government, like running after big individual and corporate tax cheats, and to reduce the tax breaks given to foreign corporations.

The speakers who made the most sense included Jay Sonza and Kuh Ledesma, who showed that cogent arguments instead of emotional grandstanding could have a stronger impact on rallyists and legislators alike.

What about the members of the general public who watched the rally as it progressed? Some of them were listening to the arguments, but sad to say, most of them were there just to gawk at the stars and to have their photos taken with them.

Obviously, it'll take more than one rally to get them to really listen to the industry's concerns and fears in this regard, as show biz folk and other professionals want.

And so, to work—harder.

ALCASID. Plays a seminarian in new Viva movie.

MEDINA. Producer-host of "Travel Time."

'And the Golden Globe goes to . . .'

By Candy L. Cantada

THE LOOK of the evening—shock! No one seemed to have expected their names to be called out—not multi-awarded veterans like Meryl Streep nor first-time winners like Kim Cattrall. It was an evening of surprises, and winners made no attempt to hide their incredulous reactions, not even to maintain their poise. But then again . . . these are great actors.

For film buffs, the Golden Globe is the second most awaited award, next only to the Oscars. Millions of people all over the world tune in to this annual event.

Event

Whether it's to find out which movies we now *must* see, or simply to watch our favorite actors at their most glamorous and most candid, the awards night is an event not to be missed. It's the reason why many of us call in sick or cut class on the morning of its live telecast.

The beauty of the Golden Globe is its no-frills, straight-to-the-point presentation. Unlike many awards ceremonies that stretch to four or five hours because of extended production numbers and tributes, the Golden Globe is cut to the bare essentials—the presenters, the nominees and the winners.

Interesting viewing

The idea of presenting the different categories in no apparent logical order (jumping from television to cinema, comedy to drama) makes for interesting viewing. The audience is kept guessing what's up next. But the highlight of the evening, as with all other awards shows, is the acceptance speech.

The most memorable and emotional award of the evening was the first. Meryl Streep received a Best Supporting Actress trophy for the movie "Adaptation." It is widely known that Meryl Streep is one of the finest actors of our time . . . known to everyone save herself.

In a recent interview with Oprah Winfrey, Streep confessed her insecurities at the start of every new project. She often asks her agent to remove her from a film when she feels incapable of giving life to the character she has been hired to portray.

STREEP. Memorable and emotional acceptance speech.

She says, "I don't know how to act. Why would anyone want to see me on screen anymore?" This from a woman who has won two Oscars and three Globes, and has been nominated over 20 times by various award-giving bodies!

Her unassuming ways were evident in the Golden Globe Awards, as well. She was hysterical with disbelief! In her acceptance speech she said she was "just getting comfortable for a long winter's nap," having been nominated many times, and for years now, not actually winning.

Dry spell

The award may have broken more than just a long, dry spell for Streep. It may have just given her back her self-confidence, well-deserved and long overdue.

Much more composed was Streep's co-star in "The Hours," Nicole Kidman. She bested four other women (including Streep) in the Best Actress—Dramatic Film Category for her portrayal of Virginia Woolf in that movie.

Though we have not seen "The Hours," the short clip presented in the program suggests that this may be Kidman's best performance yet. There was absolutely no trace of Kidman in the film. It's as if she had transformed herself completely into the character she was portraying.

In her speech, she urged writers and directors to keep on putting "rich and complex characters onscreen" for actors to play. Clearly, she wants to be challenged by every role she takes on. And she has not disappointed us yet.

A delight to watch was Renee Zellweger, who won as Best Actress in a Musical for "Chicago." Before dashing to the stage to pick up her trophy, she made a quick side trip to her co-star and co-nominee Catherine Zeta-Jones for a sincere gesture of shared victory—a big, fat hug. Zeta-Jones was the frontrunner in this category and Zellweger's win was an upset. But in her speech, Zellweger's tribute to her friend and colleague, "I'm so glad that now the world knows what you can do," was enough to bring Zeta-Jones to tears.

Laryngitis

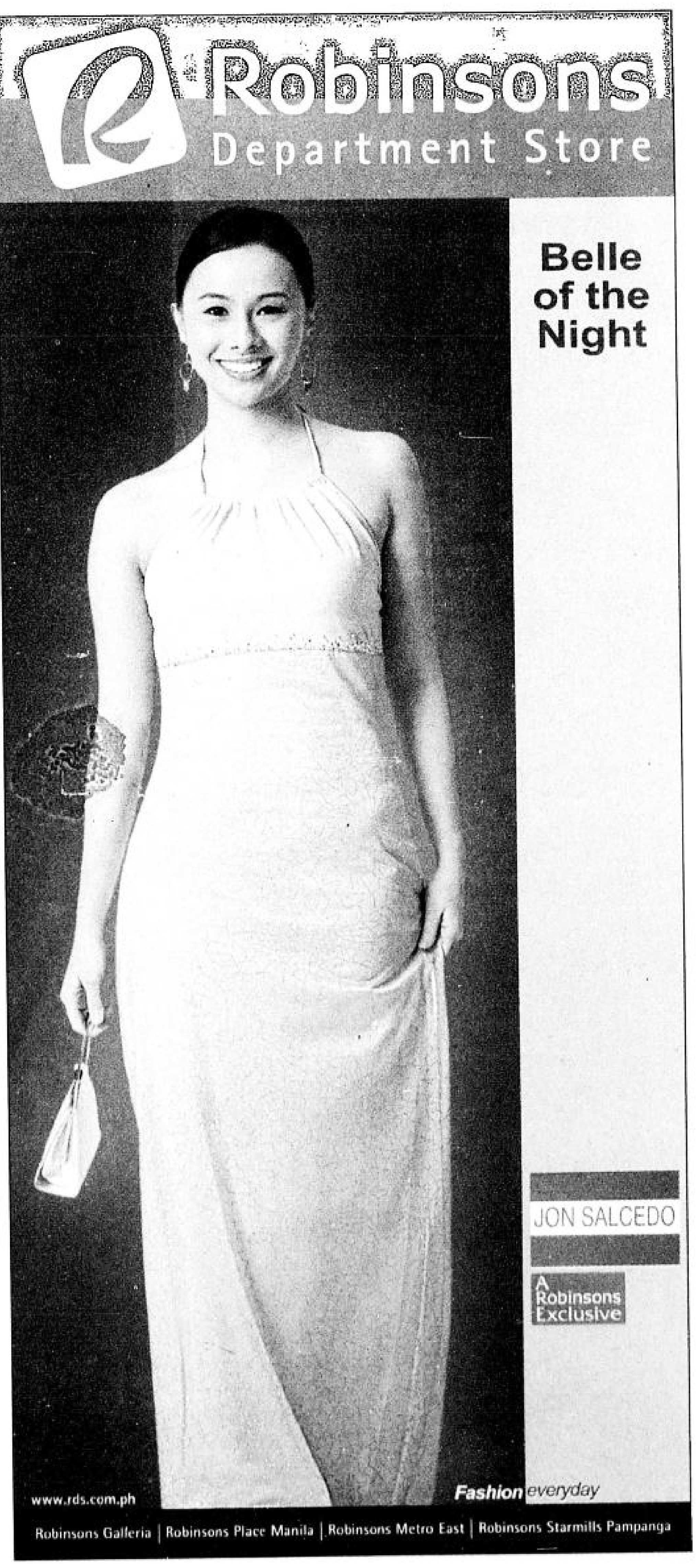
In the television categories, Edie Falco, Best Actress in a Drama Series for "The Sopranos," whispered her way through her acceptance speech—laryngitis kept her thanks short and sweet.

Jennifer Aniston, Best Actress in a Comedy Series for "Friends," said she had just arrived when her name was called. After hobbling across the floor, with her cane and what looked like a sore ankle, Aniston managed to remember the names of her five co-stars—but, quite innocently, forgot to mention her husband's.

Tongue firlmy in cheek, Kim Cattrall acknowledged all the men she—or her character—had to "sleep" with to bag the Best Supporting Actress in a Comedy Award for "Sex and the City." But she also gave generous recognition to her three girl friends from the series. "Men may come and go but women stay," she said proudly.

Whether on the silver screen or the boob tube, we love watching them play roles from the silly to the dramatic. But when actors come out as themselves, we adore them even more.

Such is the charm of these awards ceremonies. For a brief moment, we see the stars for who they are, not delivering lines taken from a script, but uttering words of their own.



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DiCaprio, Hanks and Spielberg work well together

By Nestor U. Torre

WHAT happens when three of the film world's biggest names work on a film together? Who cries uncle? Who gets the longest trailer? Who gets the final cut?

No contest

As it turns out, there was no contest at all between superstars Tom Hanks and Leonardo DiCaprio and super-director Steven Spielberg. From the word go, the two stars deferred to the master megman, as well they should.

After all, while they may make more money than he does, he has more Oscars (three) than they do (Hanks has two, DiCaprio has "only" a nomination). And he's one of the big bosses at DreamWorks, which produced their latest blockbuster.

Fact is, however, Leonardo and Tom didn't need to be beaten into submission by Steven's sterling credits. Being true film artists, they knew from the start that he was the top man on the production's totem pole, so that was that: *He* got the longest trailer-and final cut—the works!

Spielberg also got to the movie's material first: he read the best-selling autobiography of the real protagonist, con man Frank W. Abagnale, Jr., and instantly appreciated its potential as a film:

"I was like many people who fell under his seductive influence just through his book," Spielberg says. "And when you meet him, you understand in a second how he could pull the wool over your eyes and convince you that he was a doctor or a lawyer.

"I have always loved movies about sensational rogues—they break the law, but you just have to love them for their moxie."

Right off, the ace director knew that the role of the young master con man was just right for DiCaprio: "Leo is a very inventive actor and has lots of ideas. He is also his own best critic.

Brilliant

"Even when I was happy with a shot, he would sometimes ask for another take—and he would invariably come up with something new that was brilliant."

Leo appreciated his director's trust in his thespic instincts: "That's the wonderful thing with Steven, he's so open-minded. I think that's part of what makes him such a great director—he brings out the best in you, and has everybody working together towards a common goal."

FBI agent

"Everybody" of course includes Tom Hanks, who plays the FBI agent who patiently tracks the elusive con man down. What about the agent's character made Hanks eager to play him?

"It was the fact that he's not only bent on catching the guy, but also perceives just what kind of genius he is. They may be adversaries, but they also develop a unique relationship. When the agent I play finds out that the con man is so young, he feels almost protective of him, like his surrogate father.

"He's going to arrest him and send him to jail, but he also sees a fragile human being who is worth trying to redeem."

After he had found his key actor, Spielberg cast the other important roles in the film-Christopher Walken as Abagnale's father, Martin Sheen as a district attorney—and shooting began. There was a lot of moving around from location to location.

THE MASTER megman is flanked by DiCaprio (left) and Hanks.

Momentum

Spielberg exclaims, "I have never worked faster in my entire life! But I think it kept the momentum going for the entire cast and crew."

DiCaprio agrees: "We were constantly moving, but that was good. We were like a theater group, we were always creating new things. I think the frenetic pace gave the entire production so much life and energy!"

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RICHARD Gere in "Chicago," the Berlinale's opening film.

Berlinale films reflect troubled political climate

By Andrew McKenzie-McHarg

BERLIN—Never a frivolous affair, the Berlin Film Festival will be even more serious than usual due to the troubled political climate since the Sept. 11 terror attacks, the festival's director said Tuesday.

"A film festival of these dimensions has to reflect the political realities," Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick told reporters.

More than 300 films will be screened during the 53rd Berlin Film Festival from Feb. 6-16, with 22 competing for the Golden Bear award.

Plight of refugees

Besides the usual Hollywood fare, the festival will feature three films examining the plight of refugees, including "In This World," by renowned British director Michael Winterbottom, which traces the journey of two Afghan refugee across Iran, Turkey, Italy and France to England.

Documentaries also will have a strong presence, including Oliver Stone's "Comandante," about Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

Among the American films being shown, "25th Hour" from Spike Lee, "Adaptation" from Spike Jonze, and "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," the directorial debut of George Clooney, feature prominently.

Hit musical

The festival opens with "Chicago," a film version of the hit musical starring Richard Gere and Catherine Zeta-Jones. The closing slot has been filled with Martin Scorsese's depiction of gang violence in 19th century America, "Gang of New York."

Kosslick declined to discuss whether additional security precautions have been taken, but said so far no stars have canceled appearances due to the growing threat of war against Iraq. "We presume there will be no war during this time," he said.

A further trend reflected in this year's films is the move toward digital technology, which has made it possible for young filmmakers to realize their visions on a low budget. The film festival this year features Berlinale Talent Campus, a workshop during which 500 young filmmakers from around the world will be coached by directors such as Stephen Frears and Wim Wenders.

Wider audience

Kosslick prides himself on the fact that the film festival is accessible to a wider audience and not just an exclusive event for stars and journalists. More than 130,000 tickets were sold to the public in 2002.

Last year's Golden Bear was shared by "Bloody Sunday," a film from British director Paul Greengrass dramatizing one of the most infamous incidents in Northern Ireland's history, and "Spirited Away," an animated adventure from Japan's Hayao Miyazaki. *AP*

SATURDAY*Special*

Jeff Goldblum seeks the truth with 'War Stories'

By Bridget Byrne

LOS ANGELES—After years of playing nerdy or neurotic characters in such films as "The Big Chill," "Jurassic Park" and "The Fly," Jeff Goldblum was ready for a leading action role. He was also ready for a return to the more regular schedule of series television.

He got the role, but not the series.

Fictional conflict

Goldblum plays intrepid newspaper reporter Ben Dansmore in the NBC movie "War Stories," about war correspondents covering a fictional conflict in the Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan between US-supported government troops and al-Qaida-backed Islamic rebels.

The project was originally developed as a pilot for a potential series, but Goldblum says the network "felt it was too risky" as a weekly show.

Executive producer Keith Addis says the answer the network gave him was it "didn't think the American public was ready for material this serious incorporated into their primetime entertainment programs."

NBC Entertainment president Jeff Zucker would only say: "We think the show works great as a two-hour movie and we are eager for America to see it."

Terrain

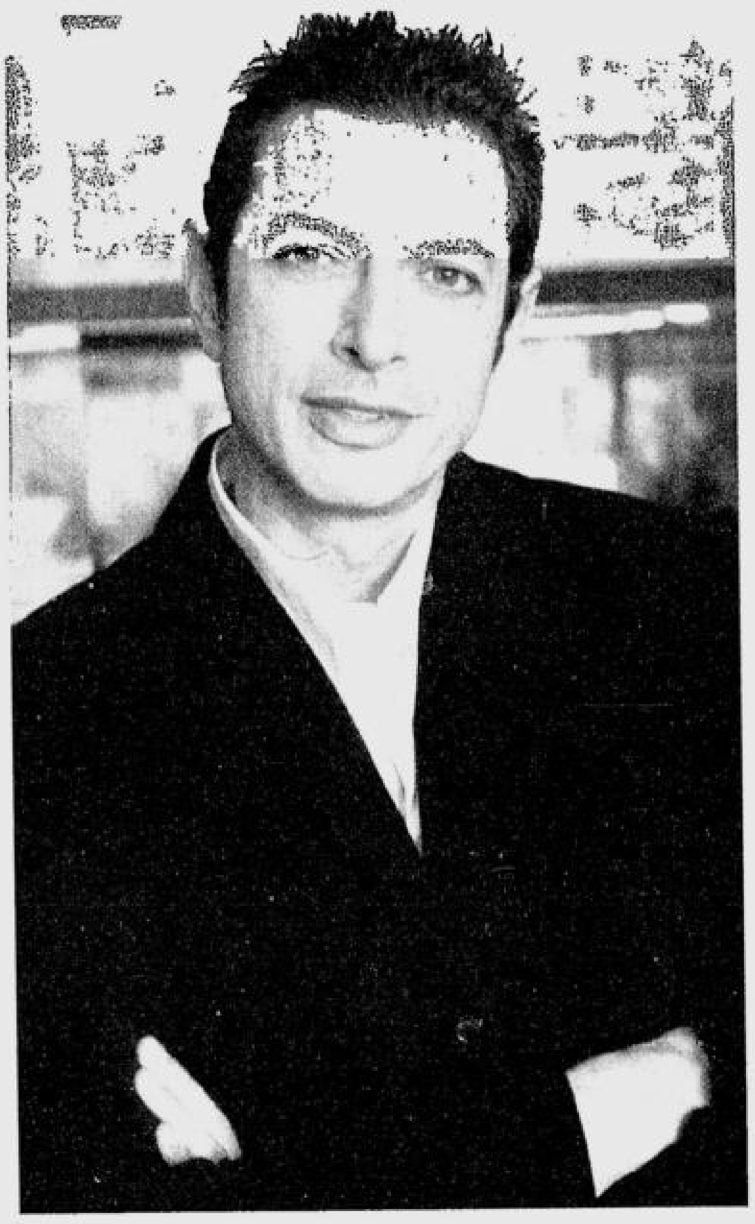
The script by Peter Noah was written before the terrorist events of Sept. 11, but not filmed until early in 2002. The terrain of Santa Clarita, just north of Los Angeles, doubled for Uzbekistan.

Goldblum, who draws a parallel between actors and journalists as "truth seekers," says he researched his role as a reporter by talking extensively with Los Angeles Times writer John Balzar, who covered the Gulf War, reading numerous books on war reporting, and watching battlefield films such as "Under Fire," "Salvador" and the Oscar-nominated 2001 documentary "War Photographer."

The actor says he was seeking a sense of the "idealism and toughness" that battlefield reporters need.

"At this point in my life, I've gotten fairly used to comfort traveling, but those guys are intrepid. It's a lonesome road," says Goldblum.

Addis says the role of Dansmore—"a very cerebral and also very active guy"—fit Goldblum "like a glove." It provided the actor with "opportunities to do what I think he does best: be a very contemporary, sophisticated, smart guy, dealing with important contemporary issues."



GOLDBLUM. Draws a parallel between actors and journalists as "truth-seekers."

AP

Says Goldblum: "To the extent you can actually be a human being interested in the human condition, pay attention to what's going on in the world, use your curiosity about people, that's the extent to which you at least have a chance to be a quality actor."

Self-importance

Yet he doesn't hesitate to make fun of actors' self-importance, as he will on the Feb. 13 episode of "Friends" (NBC, 8 p.m.). He plays Leonard, lead actor and director of a Broadway show for which Joey auditions.

"It's funny . . . Very fun to do, dah, dah, dah . . .," Goldblum says, not wanting to give away any details of the episode.

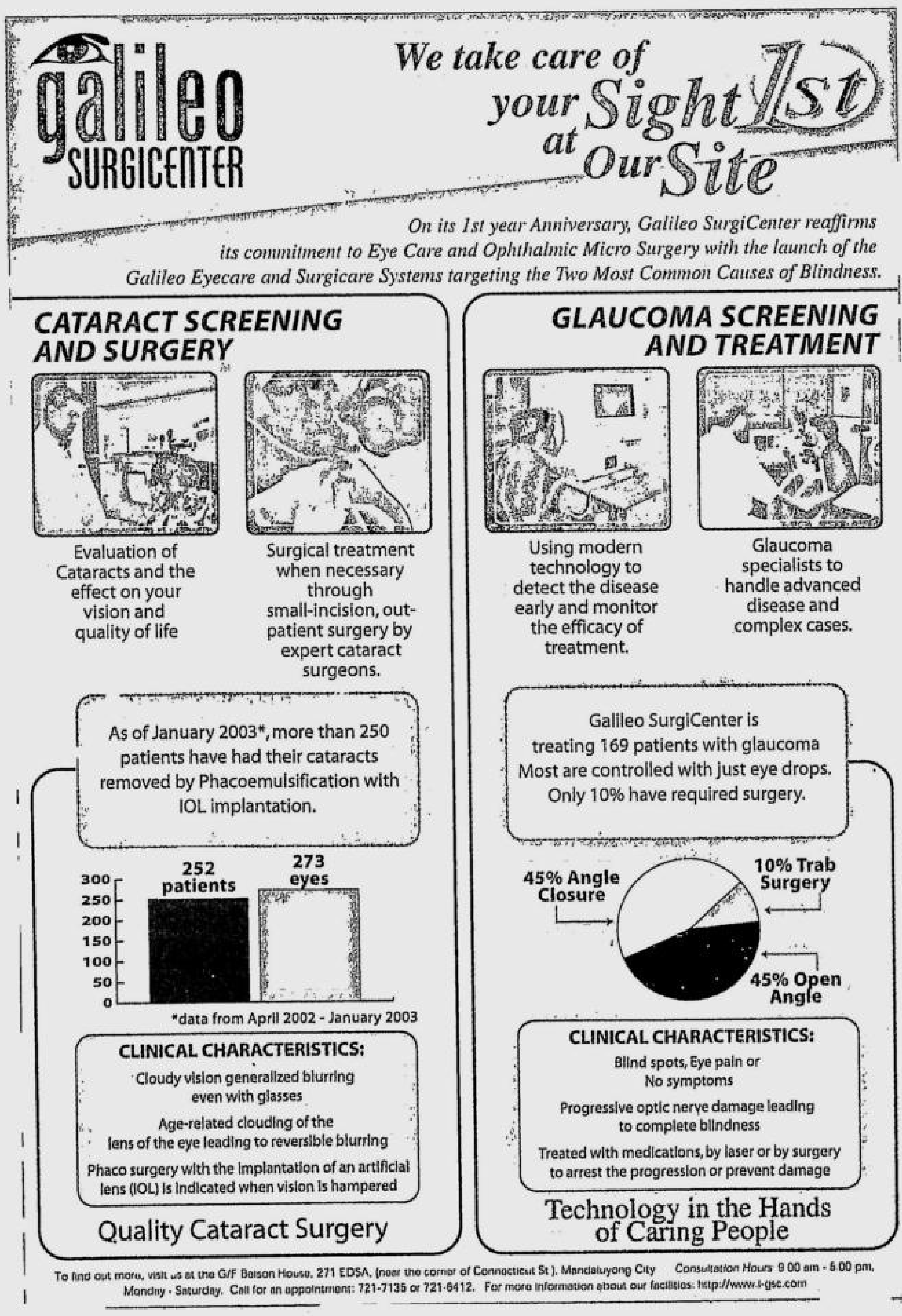
Goldblum's credits range from roles in the blockbuster action hit "Independence Day" to oddball fare like "The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension" and the short-lived 1980 TV detective series "Tenspeed and Brown Shoe."

Now 50, Goldblum grew up in Pittsburgh, the son of a physician. In fifth grade, he was in "a Gilbert and Sullivan type thing, full of singing and romantic stuff . . . it kind of went swimmingly. I felt by the end exhilarated in a way which I knew was different than I had ever been before."

By the time he left school, he was "head over heels in love" with the idea of being an actor. He studied with famed teacher Sanford Meisner at New York's Neighborhood Playhouse. Now he teaches his own version of Meisner's theories to students at Playhouse West in Los Angeles, attempting to imbue the concept that "actors are truth-seekers."

Last year writer-director Burr Steers, who had been one of his students, asked him to be in his somewhat autobiographical film "Igby Goes Down."

"He told me, `Boy, those classes really meant a lot to me. You've got to be in this movie,'" says Goldblum, completely amused by the fact that the role turned out to be a "dictatorial, abusive, authoritarian, ultraconservative, materialistic monster!" *AP*



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Reality TV shows hit the spot with producers, viewers

By Nestor U. Torre

"REALITY" TV is the rage abroad, and it's also becoming more popular here. What accounts for its current cachet in the broadcasting field?

Savings

First, "reality" shows are programs that don't feature actors, only people who play themselves. So, right off the bat, you have the huge savings of not having to pay stellar fees, which eat up most other shows' budgets.

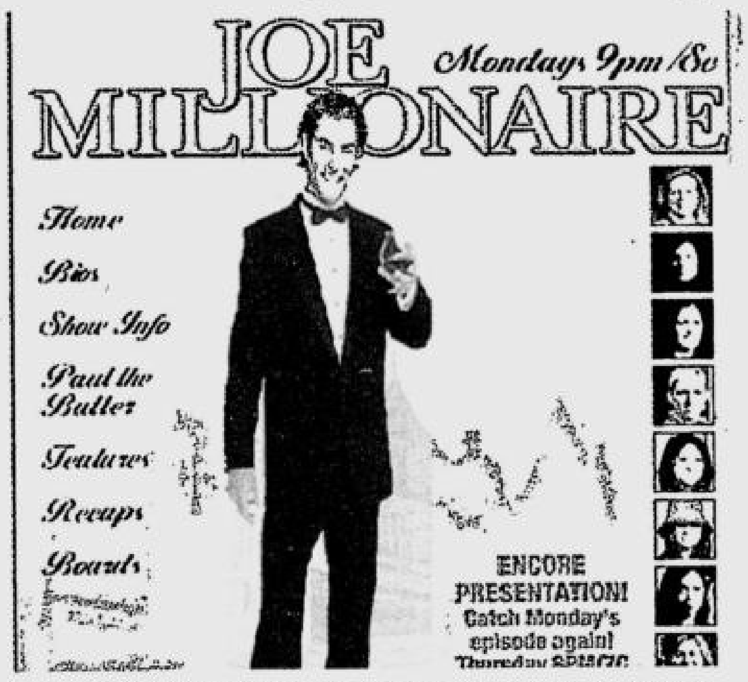
In addition, most reality shows require people to test the limits of human endurance, show off weirdly unusual talents, bare their souls, or make absolute fools of themselves. So, there's a lot of "fascinating" behavior to watch, plus some keen competition, hence the shows' appeal to viewers is high.

This combination of affordability and viewability has made reality shows the way to go for many TV people, including some who should know better. But they really aren't all that new, only their currently heightened popularity is.

Same combination

TV veterans recall that pretty much the same combination of plus-minus factors made early shows like "Beat the Clock," "Truth or Consequence" and "Candid Camera" popular viewing fare decades ago. Like today's reality shows, they drew viewers due to the public humiliation that they occasionally heaped on the "ordinary" people who appeared in them.

That formula has become more graphic and coarser of late, and there are many more shows that feed from the same trough of cheap and tawdry attractions. In addition, there's a lot of sexual pandering that leaves viewers both scandalized and delighted.



"JOE MILLIONAIRE." First episode pulled in more than 18 million viewers.

Decades ago, sex was a taboo on TV, so early reality shows like "Strike It Rich" and "Queen for a Day" concentrated on cheap monetary thrills and tawdry exploitation of emotions, instead.

Thus, on "Queen for a Day," fiercely miserable wives and mothers competed with each other to come up with the most awesomely tragic problem of all— a child who had asthma, a wayward husband, accidents galore—with the TV audience grading each of them on some sort of misery meter.

Taking the whole darn thing even closer to the dawn of what passes now for modern civilization, culture vultures see the roots of reality TV in the Barnum and Bailey "let them eat freaks" circuses for the unwashed masses.

Talent scouts

Those were the days when "talent scouts" for the likes of P.T. Barnum scoured the world for midgets, giants, Siamese twins, bearded ladies—the odder, the better.

Barnum and company's success fed off people's hunger to see freaks or other people humiliating themselves. It was weird and tawdry, but it satisfied their ravenous appetite for—well, the weird and tawdry.

These days, the formula has been jazzed up and made more exciting with million-dollar prizes to compensate for all that effort and humiliation.

The huge success of shows like

REALITY/ E3

With over two million albums sold, Bond string quartet has the last laugh

By Mona Gonzalez

IF surprises were the yardstick for success, Bond would qualify. After all, when was the last time you watched a string quartet of four beautiful, nubile women, playing violins, and sexily clad *ala* Spice Girls? That's Bond.

Stiff competition

Indeed Eos Chater (second violin, whom I interviewed by long distance), Haylie Ecker (first violin), Tania Davis (viola) and Gay-Yee Westerhoff (cello) could give Halle Berry stiff competition—were they to star in Bond's (*aka* James) latest action flick. But they'd rather pull strings.

"Bond is everything I've dreamed of," Eos told me. I could imagine, as I heard her frolicsome tone, a lovely head of hair bobbing happily back and forth as she spoke. "We get on really well. We like to see the funny side of things."

Consider for example, two years back, when Bond's first album, "Born" was banned from the UK classical Top 10 charts by organizers—two weeks after they'd reached the No. 2 spot! "The organizers must have finally listened to our music when they decided," Eos said, laughing.

Multi-cultural

And they agreed, saying, "Our music is classically influenced, but blends in a lot of multi-cultural styles and genres. It's not strictly classical. But others in the chart were also not classical, like Celine Dion (for her hit song in 'Titanic') and U2," Eos pointed out.

And yet, with over two million albums sold, and gold and platinum albums in Britain, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Italy, Belgium, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan, Bond had the last laugh.

Not to mention their performance at Times Square in "Pavarotti and Friends" (alongside Tom Jones, George Benson, Barry White, etc.), the Winter Olympics, MTV, and the Royal Albert Hall, to name a few. They have given sell-out concert performances all around the world.

Indeed, from Pavarotti to MTV is quite a wide range—and for Eos, that's terrific. "Sometimes we just look at each other and think, 'Wow!' Yesterday we did a religious program and played something sedate. Later we did a club, then an underground radio station. It's crazy—yet fun to be able to span these different areas of music."

Eos is particularly delighted with the tremendous acceptance Bond has received in Asia. "There is a history of instrumental music there, maybe that's why they took to our music so quickly," she enthuses.

Classical training

Bond's music is no piece of cake. They all had classical training at the Royal College of Music in London (Eos, second violin); London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Haylie, first violinist and Tania, viola); Sydney Conservatorium (Tania); and Trinity College of music in London (Gay-Yee, cellist).

And yet, Eos is no musical snob. "The Beatles never studied music, they just watched and learned. I have great respect for all types of musicians, whether pop or classical. It all boils down to the quality of the music."

Now they are mingling with musical and show biz greats all the way up to Hollywood. The experience has, at times, been daunting. For example, Eos recalls the time she accidentally did a "Marilyn Monroe" when Bond performed in a party attended by the likes of Lenny Kravitz, Denzel Washington, *et. al.*

Party

"It was the party of the 'Man of the Year Awards' in America," Eos recalls. "There were wind machines, and we told them to put them on the corners." Instead, one wind machine was right behind Eos' back, and her skirt—like Marilyn's—flew upward.

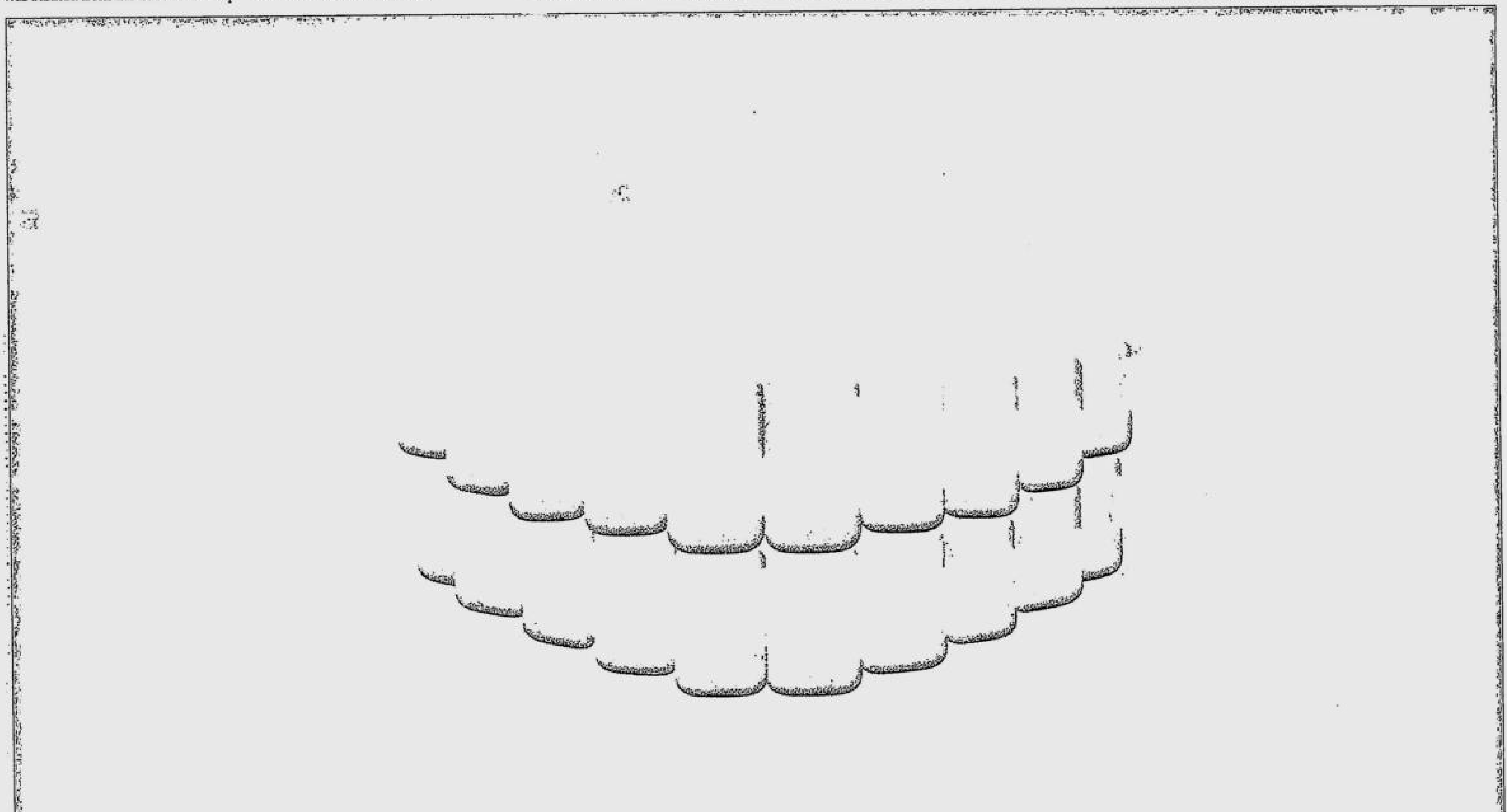
"I had to carry on playing, so I signaled for them to move the machine. Instead they made it worse! So I inched my way along the stage to find a spot that wasn't windy."

BOND. "Our music is classically influenced, but blends in a lot of multi-cultural styles and genres.

By the end of the song she was off one of the wings, while the other Bond girls were in the middle. "I didn't come back anymore—I was so embarrassed," Eos winced.

Listening to Bond's newest album, "Shine," can be quite an experience. Their expertise—and creativity—are evident. You'll find traces of different musical influences—Arab ("We've been to Morocco—lots of North African music is Arabic. I think it's powerful and moving."), Asian, Irish, a little bit of gypsy; and for classical lovers, some inspiration from Albioni Adagio and Borodin's Polovtsian Dances. You'll even find a little bit of Bollywood!

"On a plane, we saw a Bollywood film and listened to the music. It's great, uplifting, and works well with strings. It's also got a slightly funny side to it, so we put it in the album," Eos says.



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Broadway bounces back from Sept. 11 trauma

By Walker Simon

NEW YORK—Battered by the attacks of Sept. 11, 2 001, Broadway climbed steadily out of its slump to draw near-record numbers in 2002, targeting local audiences rather than tourists and pulling more first-time patrons, according to figures released on Tuesday.

Musical hits

A hip-hop poetry jam, a dance show set to musical hits by pop artist Billy Joel and a growing number of television and movie stars helped entice a younger, more ethnically diverse audience, the League of American Theaters and Producers said.

Attendance closed 2002 with 11.41 million theatergoers, compared with 11.39 million in 2001 and 12.01 million in 2000, it said.

Forty-six shows opened, the most in a decade, including the most musicals, 13, since 1992, it said.

Thirty-three of Broadway's 38 theaters are now showing productions.

Wider array

"Because we're offering a wider array of Broadway entertainment from Disney to hip hop, rock and opera, we're having a more ethnically diverse audience and first-time theatergoers," said Jan Svendsen, the league's director of marketing events and development.

Immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center, Broadway attendance plummeted 80 percent. Casts at several theaters took cuts in wages and benefits so the show could go on.

Broadway's collective box office gross in New York, helped by a slight increase in ticket prices, reached a record high in 2002 of $707.1 million. That was up from $664 million in 2001 and $663.5 million in 2000, a league statement said.

Christmas and Thanksgiving recorded the highest ever attendance, it added.

"After the dark days of 9/11, Broadway's lights are shining strong," said Cristyne Nicholas, head of NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization.

To boost attendance, theaters looked to audiences closer to home, Svendsen said.

"Domestic and international travel to the city was significantly down," she said. "So we first focused on New York's metro community."

Majority

In 2002, for the first time in the recent past, New Yorkers and suburbanites accounted for the majority of the Broadway audience instead of out-of-towners, in part due to promotions and discounts, she said.

The league also aims to bring in a younger, more ethnically diverse audience.

Among the productions appealing to younger viewers was "Def Poetry Jam," which incorporates rap and hip hop. And in a new kind of musical presentation, "Movin' Out" tells in dance the story of youths coming of age via pop star Billy Joel's songs.

Reuters

BILLY Joel's songs are danced to in "Movin' Out," a new kind of musical presentation about youths coming of age.

18 hit songs in Ogie's new concert album

By Leia Torre

THE ALBUM "OA Hits Live" by Ogie Alcasid is a recording of Alcasid's concert of the same title. It features the 18 songs that he performed in the show.

Special guests

Ogie had two special guests in his concert, Regine Velasquez and Freestyle. Freestyle shares the stage with him in "Pangako," and Regine lends her voice to their duet, "Hanggang Ngayon."

One can tell that the songs are popular from the way the audience reacts. It also really helps that Ogie is a very lively performer who is not above using his talents as a comedian to enhance his audience's viewing and listening pleasure.

The second track, "Bongga Ka Day," is a smashing production number that manages to bring the whole house to its feet. Aside from the song's being very fast-paced and energetic, the accompaniment sounds modern and upbeat.

"Get The Party Started" maintains the jovial mood of the show, and energizes the audience a bit more.

Sentimental

"Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw" is a sentimental love song. "Kung Mawawala Ka" is performed with a slightly faster tempo than usual, so Ogie's version is refreshing when compared to the one that accompanies the TV soap opera of the same title.

"Hot in Here" has evoked mixed reactions from people, because of its provocative and somewhat chauvinistic lyrics. But Ogie manages to pull it off.

"Sana" starts out in a deceptively simple manner. The emotion behind the song only comes through when the chorus is reached. The same can also be said about "Ikaw Sana." The .presence of the word *"sana"* renders these songs poignant and regretful. *(To be concluded)*

Reality TV . . .

From page E2

"Survivor" and "American Idol," despite the fact that they have absolutely no star value, has confirmed that their producers are on to a very good thing, thus prompting everybody else to "think reality."

New shows along this line include "The Bachelorette" and "Joe Millionaire." The latter program is a twist on the old "Millionaire" show, with a dozen lovely gold diggers displaying their charms and wiles in the hope that the super-wealthy "searcher" decides to marry them.

Innovation

The innovation in "Joe Millionaire" is the fact that the audience knows that the guy isn't rich at all, but the "searchees" don't. So, since the audience is in on the outrageous "joke," it can observe or excitedly anticipate how the "chosen" girl will react once she discovers that her wealthy prince is in fact—a frog!

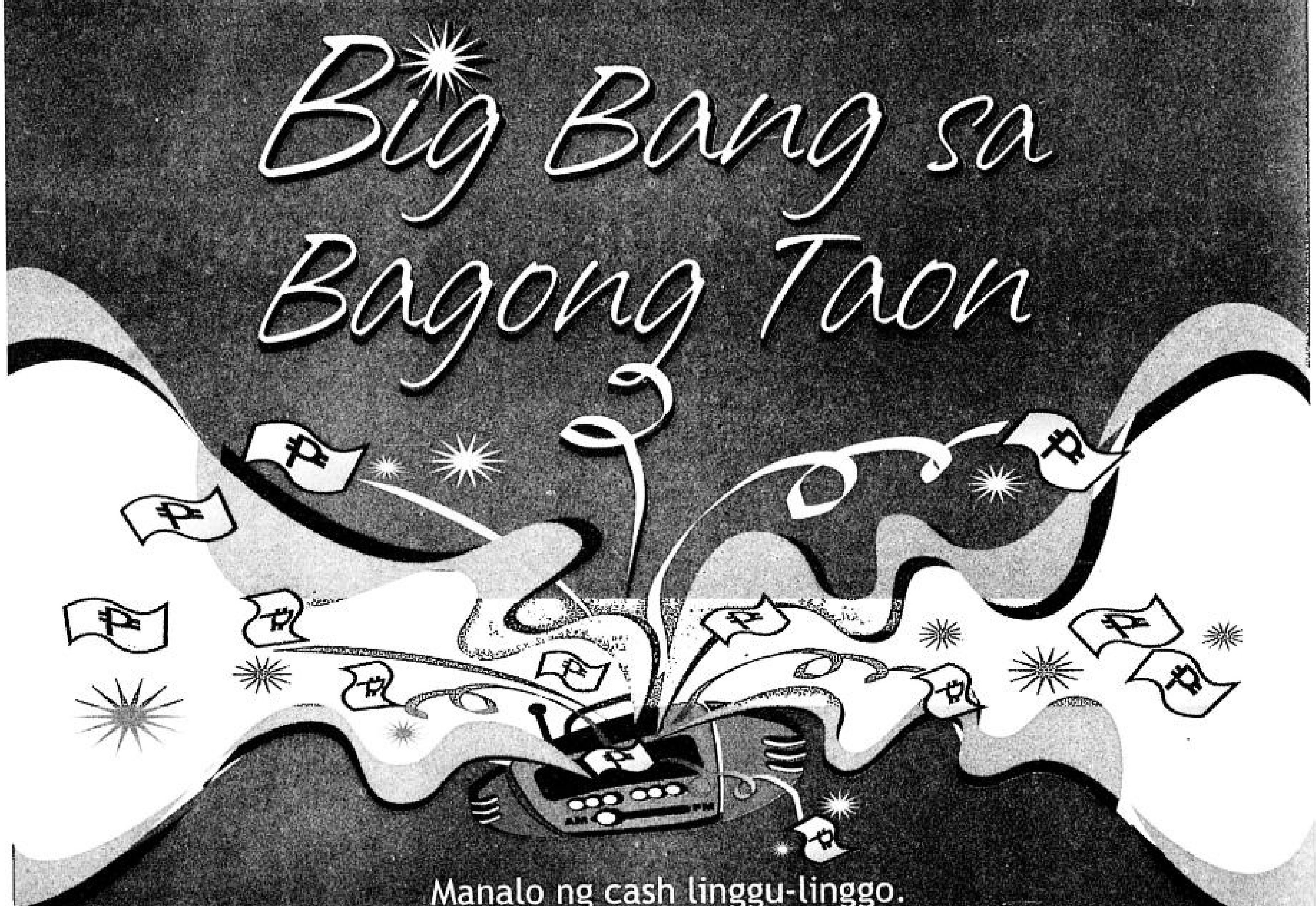
A cheap trick? Well, the first episode of "Joe Millionaire" pulled in more than 18 million viewers—and that's big bucks and top ratings in any TV executive's book.

So, sad to say, reality TV will be around for at least one more TV season. And we can expect to see even never and cheaper variations on the same tawdry and exploitative theme, like "Boot Camp" and "Man vs. Beast."

In that second show, 40 people are put in a tug-of-war competition with—an elephant!

Another reality show concept is even more outrageous: the contestant is required to break into a museum to steal a famous painting. The "excitement" is in seeing how far he gets with his million-dollar loot before the cops nab him.

Wouldn't he be breaking the law? A lot the producer seems to care. If the projected show draws millions of viewers, it would be well worth—a jail sentence? Gulp.



Bilang pagsalubong sa 2003,
may malaking pasabog ng premyo ang
Modess at Carefree

Big Bang sa Bagong Taon

Manalo ng cash linggu-linggo.
As much as P3,000,000 total prizes ang ipamimigay.
Kaya, sali na!

Kay daling sumali. Makinig lang sa MBC (Manila Broadcasting Corporation) at ABS-CBN Radio Stations.

MECHANICS
- Ang promo ay para sa mga babaeng may edad 12-35 gulang.
- Para sumali, isulat lang ang pangalan, address, birthday at pumirma sa isang maliit na papel, kalakip ng 3 pakete ng kahit anong produkto ng Modess (mapa-Maxi, Spirit, Ultra Thin, All Nights o Longs), at samahan ng isa pang pakete ng kahit anong Carefree product. Lahat ng 4 na pakete ang kailangan ilakip.
- Ilagay sa white legal size na sobre at dalhin o ipadala sa "Big Bang Sa Bagong Taon" c/o ng alin man sa mga sumusunod na stations:
  Para sa taga-GMA: DZRH Manila, DWRR Manila
  Para sa taga-Luzon: DWMB Baguio, HOT FM Dagupan, MOR FM Naga, MOR FM Legaspi, DZNL FM La Union
  Para sa taga-Visayas: YES FM Dumaguete, YES FM Bacolod, HOT FM Cebu, DYMB FM Iloilo
  Para sa taga-Mindanao: MOR FM Davao, MOR FM Cagayan De Oro

WEEKLY DRAW
- 6 winners each mula sa DZRH Manila, YES FM Dumaguete, DWMB Baguio, HOT FM Dagupan, DYMB FM Iloilo, YES FM Bacolod, HOT FM Cebu, DZNL FM La Union; at sa ABS-CBN naman: DWRR Manila, MOR FM Naga, MOR FM Legaspi, MOR FM Davao, MOR FM Cagayan De Oro ang bubunutin tuwing Sabado simula Pebrero 08 hanggang Marso 29, 2003.
- Ang deadline para sa submission ng mga entries sa weekly draw ay tuwing Biyernes, 6pm simula Pebrero 7 - Marso 28. Ang deadline ng entries para sa Grand Draw ay sa Marso 28, 2003 6pm.
- Ang pag-draw ng weekly winners ay gagawin tuwing Sabado sa ganap na alas-10 ng umaga at ia-announce on-air ng 11 am.
- Anim ang magwawagi ng cash prizes bawat station:
  Dalawa ang mananalo ng tig-P5,000
  Dalawa din na tig-P3,000
  Dalawa pa na tig-P2,000
- Ang mga nanalo sa weekly draw ay maaari pa ring magpadala ng entries at sumali sa mga susunod pang weekly draws.
- Para sa Grand Draw, isang beses lamang maaaring manalo sa bawat draw. Kapag nabunot ng mahigit sa isang beses ang pangalan, matatanggap ng winner ang premyong may mas malaking halaga.
- Lahat ng non-winning entries sa weekly draws ay qualified lamang sa Grand Draw.

GRAND DRAW
- Mayroong Grand Draw sa bawat sumusunod na station:

MBC stations:
1. GMA area: c/o DZRH Bldg., Pasay City : DZRH AM
2. Luzon area: c/o Dagupan station : DWMB BAGUIO, HOT FM DAGUPAN, DZNL LA UNION
3. Visayas area: c/o Cebu station : YES FM DUMAGUETE, DYMB ILOILO, YES FM BACOLOD, HOT FM CEBU

ABC-CBN stations:
1. GMA area: c/o DWRR FM, Mother Ignacia St., Diliman, Q.C. : DWRR FM
2. Luzon area: c/o MOR FM Naga, Panganiban Ave., Naga City : MOR FM NAGA, MOR FM LEGASPI
3. Mindanao area: c/o MOR Davao, Shrine Hills, Matina, Davao City : MOR FM DAVAO, MOR FM CAGAYAN DE ORO

- Bawat area ay magkakaroon ng 1st prize na nagkakahalaga ng P 100,000, 2nd prize na nagkakahalaga ng P 75,000 at 3rd prize na nagkakahalaga ng P50,000.

PARAAN SA PAGKUHA NG PREMYO
- Ang weekly at Grand Draw winners ay padadalhan ng registered notice na sila ay nanalo.
- Pumunta sa tinukoy na station na nakasaad sa notice para makuha ang premyo kasama ang valid ID at registered notice.
- Kung ikaw ay minor de edad, kailangan mong isama ang iyong magulang o guardian at dalhin ang mga mahalagang dokumento na nagpapatunay sa iyong edad.
- Ang mga premyo ay dapat makuha sa loob ng 60 days mula notification, kung hindi, sa approval ng DTI, ito ay ituturing na forfeited.
- Lahat ng premyo na lumagpas ng P10,000 ay tax-free.
- Lahat ng empleyado ng Johnson & Johnson, Mc Cann Erickson, Universal McCann, MBC at ABS-CBN at mga affiliate nito, asawa at kamag-anak hanggang sa 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity, kasama mga kamag-anak by legal adoption ay di maaaring sumali sa promo.
- Ang promo period ay mula January 24, 2003, hanggang March 28, 2003.

SCHEDULE
PROMO WEEK MANILA &
PROVINCIAL DRAW
1ST FEB. 08
2ND FEB. 15
3RD FEB. 22
4TH MAR. 01
5TH MAR. 08
6TH MAR. 15
7TH MAR. 22
8TH MAR. 29
Grand Draw APRIL 05, 2003

Johnson & Johnson

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0298, Series of 2003

TOUCH MOBILE TAKES THE COUNTRY BY STORM!

Maddening pace makes Touch Mobile fastest growing GSM brand

Touch Mobile's unprecedented growth in a span of 15 months since its launch in September 2001 makes it today's third largest GSM brand in terms of incremental subscribers uptake.

Signals are up across the land

Provided by the Globe network with over 2,000 cell sites scattered all over the country and more scheduled to roll out, Touch Mobile's subscribers are guaranteed clear calls and strong signals. Its extensive coverage has been paralleled with on-the-ground sales blitzes and roadshows featuring Touch Mobile's celebrity endorsers Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez, with guest appearances of big-name stars such as Randy Santiago, Arnel Ignacio, John Pratts, Aiza Seguerra, Keempee de Leon and Gabby Eigenman to name a few.

The touch of quality

Preferred by Filipino families, Touch Mobile has proven to have a truly pervasive coverage nationwide, seamless with clear calls, and quick connections. Subscribers express high satisfaction ratings on Touch Mobile's coverage, speed of sending text messages, and clarity of calls.

Mad about voice features

Touch Mobile pioneered the P6.50 flat rate for voice calls which has become the industry's template for affordable telephony.

On top of its lower rates, Touch Mobile provides unique voice value added services like the karaoke service which has become a big hit among subscribers. This service lets subscribers sing their favorite songs over their phone units, save the songs in the phones' memory and send them to another mobile user.

Voice messaging and voice info are Touch Mobile's other popular voice value added services that allow subscribers to either send pre-recorded sound icons by any mobile number or get the information they need, be it horoscope, news on local and international scenes, showbiz, sports, weather, traffic, and even daily gospel.

Truly a brand for the Filipino family

Seen as a warm, family-oriented brand ideal for the mass-based market living and/or working in broad market urban and suburban areas around the country, Touch Mobile is moving to capture the regional areas and expand its network and service presence all over Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Rates within everyone's reach

Aside from the lower-minute call rates at P6.50, proven nationwide coverage and unparalleled voice value added services, Touch Mobile provides the lowest price on its SIM packs at P170. Each SIM pack comes with P100 worth of free airtime, 40 free text messages every month, 245 phone book entries, and space for 30 messages in one's inbox.

With all these features and benefits one can avail of at a very affordable rate, what more can you ask for? So join in the mania now and go for Touch Mobile Super Value SIM!!

Touch Mobile
6.50
6.50

PAMPANGA

LAGUNA

BATANGAS

CEBU

P290
LOWEST RATE

touch mobile

PROVEN NATIONWIDE!

BABUYAN ISLANDS
Claveria
Aparri
Laoag
Bangued
Tuao
Tuguegarao
Vigan
Tabuk
Bontoc
Ilagan
Palanan
Lagawe
San Fernando
Bolinao
Lingayen
Dagupan
San Carlos
Tarlac
Iba
Angeles
POLILLO ISLANDS
Polillo
Manila
Larap
Daet
Sipocot
Catanduanes Island
Plaridel
Calapan
Boac
Mamburao
Legaspi
Pascual
Sorsogon
Samar
Catarman
Calbayog
Borongan
Kalibo
San Jose
Iloilo
Silay
San Carlos
Mandaue
Cadiz
Cebu
Lapu-Lapu
Maasin
Anilao
Dinagat
Pilar
Puerto Princesa
Negros
Cebu
Bohol
Tagbilaran
Surigao
Bais
Dumaguete
Siquijor
Mambajao
Butuan
Cortes
Tandag
Dipolog
Dapitan
Cagayan de Oro
Gingoog
Prosperidad
Iligan
Marawi
Malaybalay
Bislig
Balabac
Tubud
Tagum
Olutanga
Cotabato
Davao
Mati
Basilan Island
Isabela
Maganoy
Kidapawan
Digos
Isulan
Koronadal
Governor Generoso
General Santos
Jose Abad Santos

Mag-Touch Mobile SUPER VALUE SIM!

Over 2,100 cell sites nationwide

prepaid
touch mobile

Sulit sa features:

- ✓ 245 phone book entries
- ✓ Store up to 30 messages
- ✓ Low, low rates per minute ang calls*
- ✓ 40 FREE text messages per month
- ✓ Voice Messaging & Voice Info
- ✓ Karaoke Service

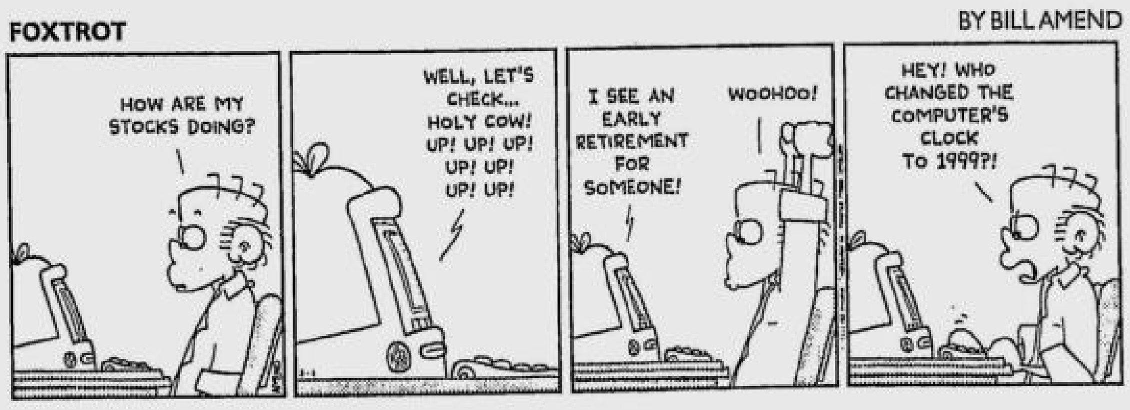
Sulit sa bulsa P170 lang ang SIM Pack!**

*Touch Mobile's all-day flat rate to all local and cell-to-cell calls. **Suggested Retail Price.

For more information, call 808 from Touch Mobile handsets (24-hour Hotline); toll-free 730-1500 from any local landline or visit *www.touchmobile.com.ph*

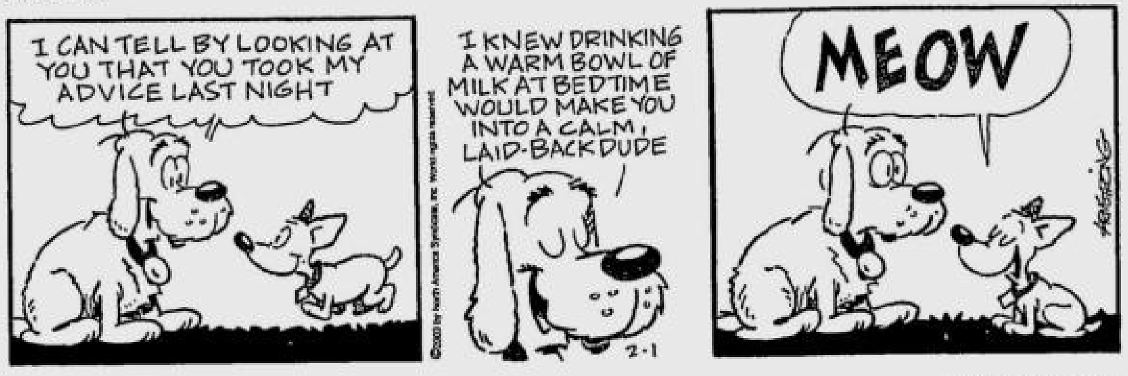
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HOW ARE MY STOCKS DOING?
WELL, LET'S CHECK... HOLY COW! UP! UP! UP! UP! UP! UP! UP!
I SEE AN EARLY RETIREMENT FOR SOMEONE!
WOOHOO!
HEY! WHO CHANGED THE COMPUTER'S CLOCK TO 1999?!

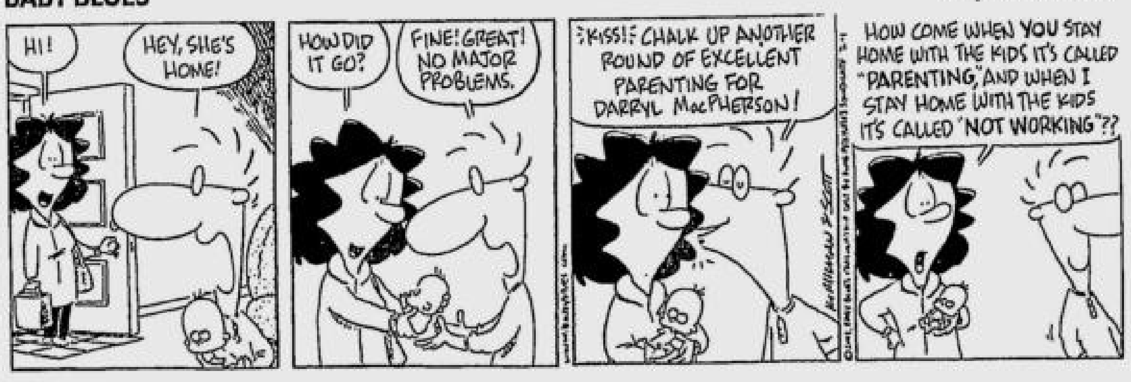
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I CAN TELL BY LOOKING AT YOU THAT YOU TOOK MY ADVICE LAST NIGHT
I KNEW DRINKING A WARM BOWL OF MILK AT BEDTIME WOULD MAKE YOU INTO A CALM, LAID-BACK DUDE
MEOW
2-1

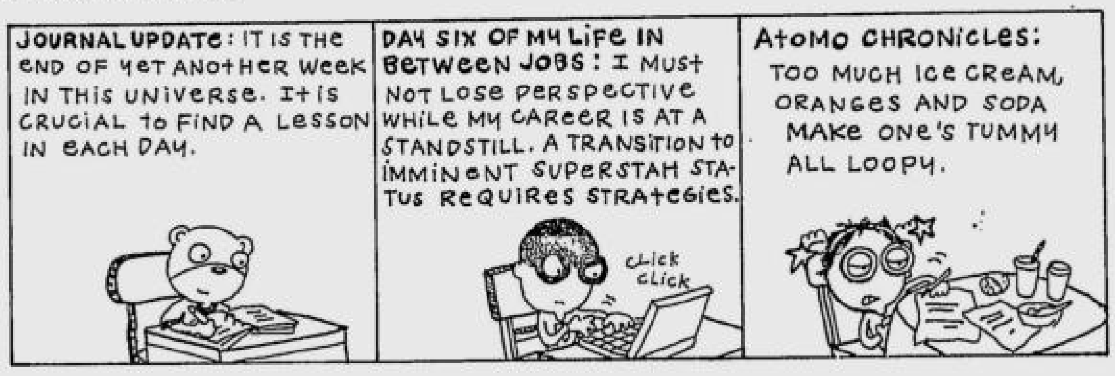
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HI!
HEY, SHE'S HOME!
HOW DID IT GO?
FINE! GREAT! NO MAJOR PROBLEMS.
KISS! CHALK UP ANOTHER ROUND OF EXCELLENT PARENTING FOR DARRYL MacPHERSON!
HOW COME WHEN YOU STAY HOME WITH THE KIDS IT'S CALLED "PARENTING," AND WHEN I STAY HOME WITH THE KIDS IT'S CALLED "NOT WORKING"??

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


JOURNAL UPDATE: IT IS THE END OF YET ANOTHER WEEK IN THIS UNIVERSE. IT IS CRUCIAL TO FIND A LESSON IN EACH DAY.
DAY SIX OF MY LIFE IN BETWEEN JOBS: I MUST NOT LOSE PERSPECTIVE WHILE MY CAREER IS AT A STANDSTILL. A TRANSITION TO IMMINENT SUPERSTAH STATUS REQUIRES STRATEGIES.
CLICK CLICK
ATOMO CHRONICLES: TOO MUCH ICE CREAM, ORANGES AND SODA MAKE ONE'S TUMMY ALL LOOPY.

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE M. BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Saturday, Feb. 1, 2003:
You might be more in touch with your long-term goals than you have been in a while. Others gather around you, allowing many new possibilities. Consider what is important to you ultimately. Understand that you, too, are transforming, thus what you think you want might not be what you will want in the future. If you are single, a relationship will knock on your door.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Extremes mark your actions. You might want to juggle all the different forces at work. Input from someone at a distance helps. Review a matter that is close to your heart. Tonight: Round up your friends.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Your ability to come to an understanding with others helps you juggle two opponents. Each person wants something very different. How you merge various interests proves to be unique.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Reach out for someone at a distance. Your sense of humor comes through with a loved one or a friend who could be having a difficult time seeing the whole picture.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Deal with someone directly. You might wonder what is going on with a partner or associate who is testy. Pitch in and help. Build on a close tie. Tonight: Go along with someone's request.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Make an effort at breaking down others' resistances. You might be more instrumental than you realize in forging peace. Use your ability to detach and gain a perspective.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Pace yourself. You might need some time to yourself. If you relax, you will come to a place of understanding. Work on realizing more of what you want.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Add more playfulness to your life, realizing what you want from a personal relationship. Keep communication flowing. What one person wants might not be what someone else desires.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Lay down and think before taking action. You might not be sure what is necessary to flex with a loved one. This person can flip from one opinion to another. Adapt your spending to a new request or someone else's need.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You can flex. You don't need to say "no" or "yes." In fact, everything will flow with ease. You'll find that a lot might be changing in the next few weeks. Transform a personal situation in a more positive way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Remain optimistic with others. New beginnings become possible to those who are capable of going within. You find answers that help you gain a perspective. Realize what might happen if you relax more.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Your smile goes a long way in melting down a problemed person. Laugh with a loved one and loosen up together. Your circle of friends could be changing. You cannot run interference here. People will be people.

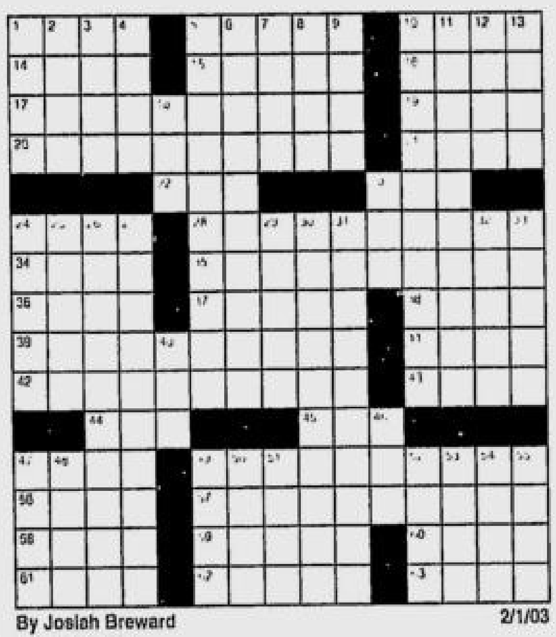
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You might want to step back some and consider your different options. Someone close to you makes a must appearance. Reach out for a parent or an older relative. Not everything is as you would like it to be. Your instincts lead you in a tough situation.

BORN TODAY
Act[illegible] Cl[illegible] Gable (190[illegible]), former [illegible]ussian President Boris Yeltsin (1931), rocker Jani Lane (1964)

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Lapse in concentration
5 Young salmon
10 Jab
14 Reno gambling game
15 Actress Shire
16 Kemo __
17 Investing with sovereign power
19 Heroic tale
20 Leaves a trail of broken hearts
21 Until
22 Solicit alms
23 Chapel vow
24 Pulverize
28 Organization of U.S. civilian workers abroad
34 French thought
35 Subjectively
36 One team
37 "The Power of Positive Thinking" writer
38 Separation of birthdays
39 Bull's-eye
41 "Scarface" star Paul
42 Surviving longer than
43 Sp. miss
44 Sushi delicacy
45 Slow-witted
47 Clamors
49 Whistling breathing
56 Exploits
57 Extends past
58 '68-to-'85 sports org.
59 Odorific compound
60 "Charley's __"
61 Meddlesome
62 Outbuildings
63 Throws in

DOWN
1 Rudder connection
2 Singer Horne
3 IBM element
4 Sci-fi author of "Narabedla"
5 Tall, silk hats
6 Executive skill
7 Actress Lena
8 Collection of fluff
9 Labels
10 Noms de plume
11 One scheduled to give a report
12 News bit
13 Art __
18 Kid
23 Cool down
24 Goof up
25 So long, Solange
26 Serenity
27 With impetuosity
29 Valuable antique violin
30 Like pressed paper
31 Motivational speakers, e.g.
32 Factory
33 Golan Heights claimant
40 Ripken, Jr. or Sr.
46 Hamm or Farrow
47 Nora of "SNL"
48 Golfer Aoki
49 Misfortunes
50 Shut your mouth!
51 Back of a major?
52 Inter-campus sports grp
53 Former Israeli prime minister Barak
54 Pres[illegible] the [illegible] button
55 Fast planes, for short



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

Friday's Puzzle Solved

S	P	I	E	S	■	B	O	O	M	■	A	D	A	M
W	O	R	T	H	■	A	B	B	E	■	U	R	D	U
A	L	O	H	A	■	C	O	S	T	■	K	N	O	T
M	A	N	O	F	T	H	E	E	A	R	■	O	R	E
■	■	■	S	T	R	E	S	S	■	O	A	S	E	S
A	C	H	■	S	A	L	■	S	P	U	M	E	■	■
L	O	A	F	■	M	O	W	■	R	E	U	B	E	N
E	M	I	L	■	P	R	O	S	E	■	S	E	T	A
C	E	R	I	S	E	■	E	W	E	■	E	S	T	S
■	■	L	E	A	D	S	■	A	M	A	■	T	A	T
B	A	I	R	N	■	A	R	R	I	V	E	■	■	■
A	T	P	■	G	I	V	E	M	E	A	N	E	Y	E
R	A	P	T	■	S	A	L	E	■	I	D	L	E	R
B	R	E	D	■	A	G	A	R	■	L	O	L	L	S
S	I	D	S	■	K	E	Y	S	■	S	W	E	P	T

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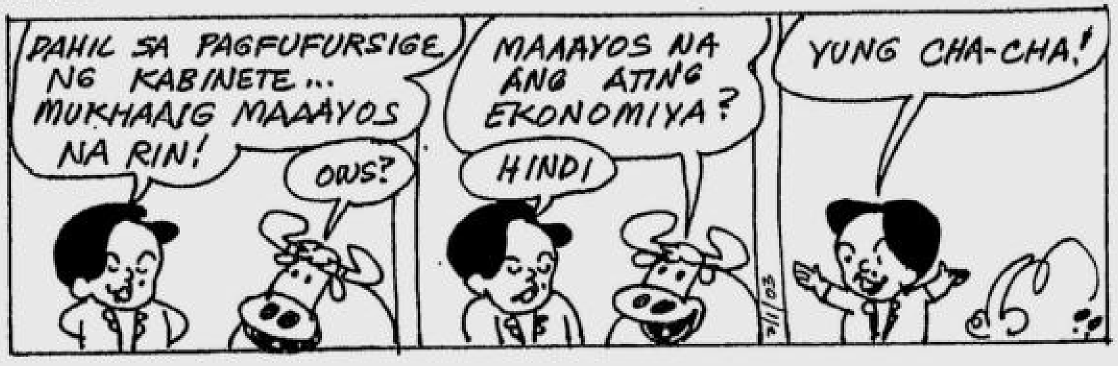
2/1/03

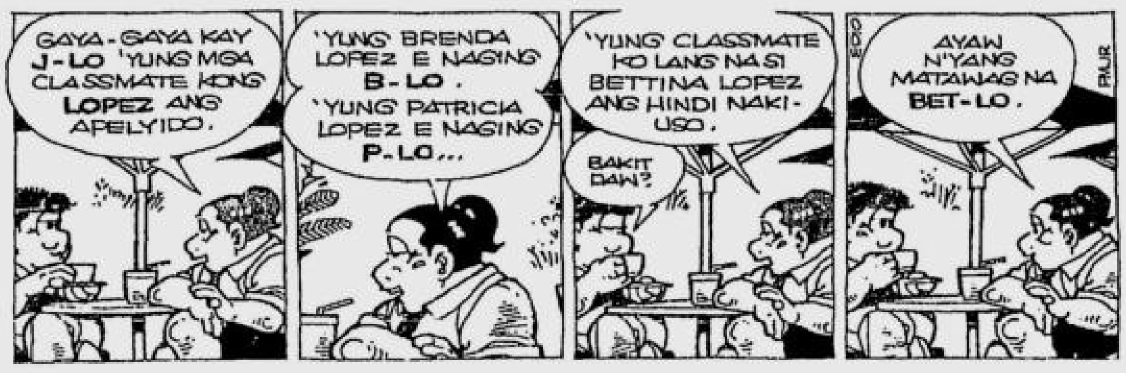
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DAHIL SA PAGFUFURSIGE NG KABINETE... MUKHANG MAAAYOS NA RIN!
OWS?
MAAAYOS NA ANG ATING EKONOMIYA?
HINDI
YUNG CHA-CHA!
2/1/03

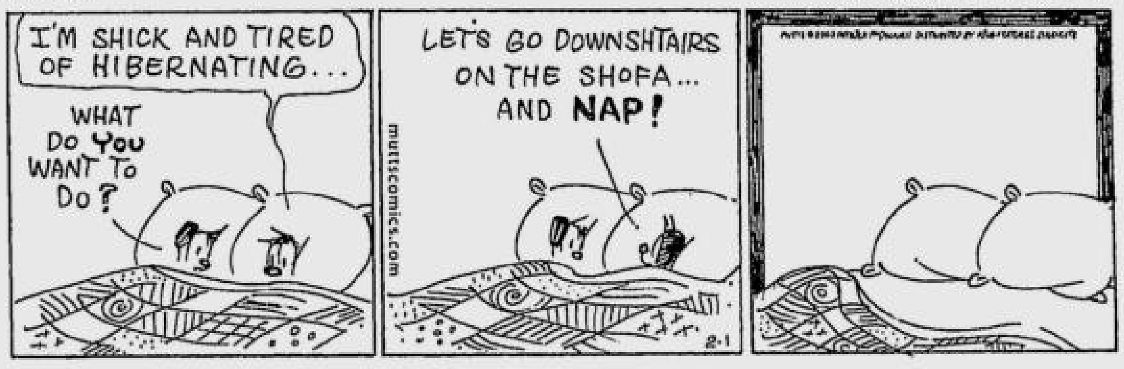
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


GAYA-GAYA KAY J-LO 'YUNG MGA CLASSMATE KONG LOPEZ ANG APELYIDO.
'YUNG BRENDA LOPEZ E NAGING B-LO. 'YUNG PATRICIA LOPEZ E NAGING P-LO...
'YUNG CLASSMATE KO LANG NA SI BETTINA LOPEZ ANG HINDI NAKI-USO.
BAKIT DAW?
AYAW N'YANG MATAWAG NA BET-LO.

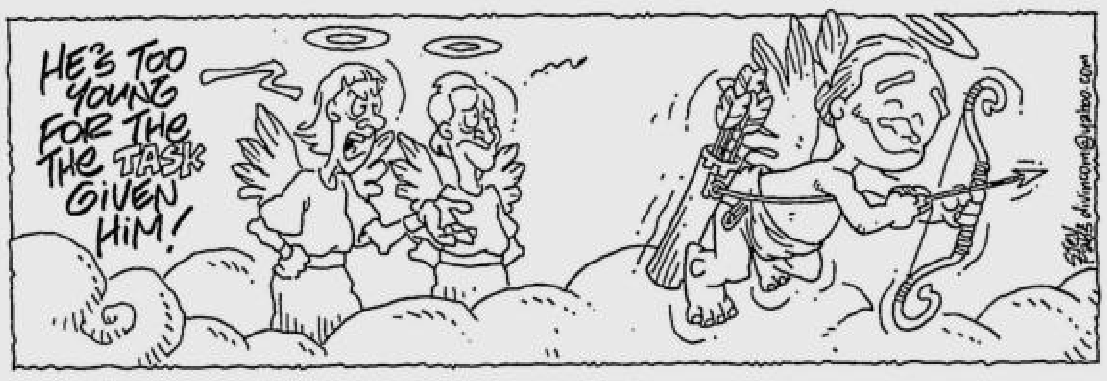
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M SHICK AND TIRED OF HIBERNATING...
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
muttscomics.com
LET'S GO DOWNSHTAIRS ON THE SHOFA... AND NAP!
2-1

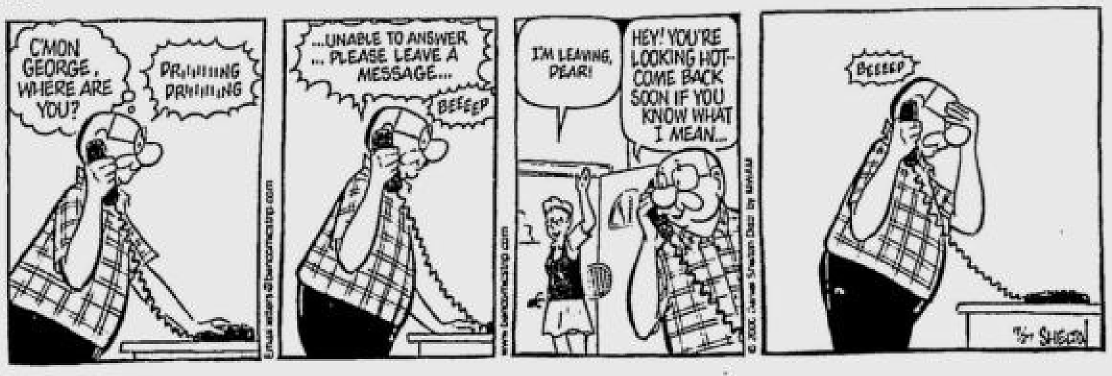
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HE'S TOO YOUNG FOR THE THE TASK GIVEN HIM!

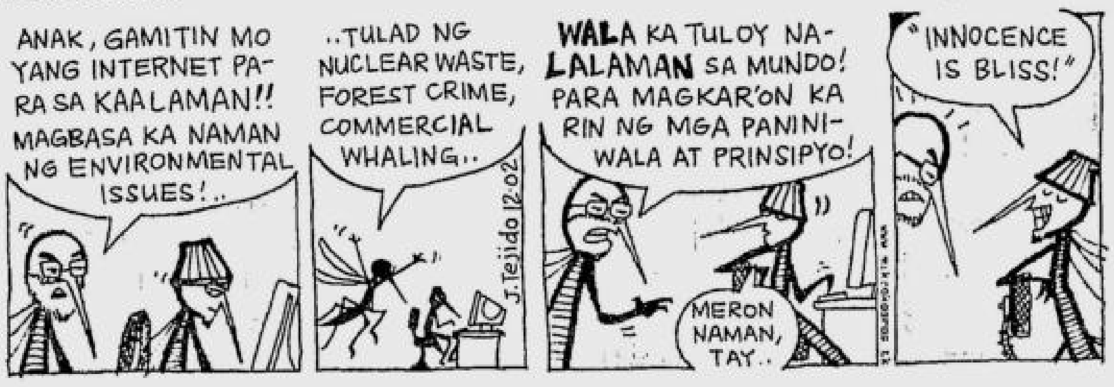
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


C'MON GEORGE, WHERE ARE YOU?
DRIIIIING DRIIIIING
...UNABLE TO ANSWER ... PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE...
BEEEEP
I'M LEAVING, DEAR!
HEY! YOU'RE LOOKING HOT-COME BACK SOON IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...
BEEEEP
SHELTON

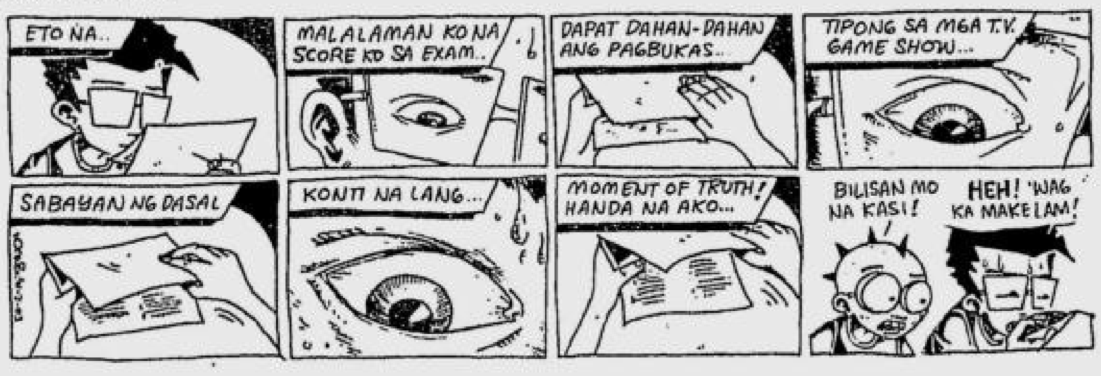
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANAK, GAMITIN MO YANG INTERNET PARA SA KAALAMAN!! MAGBASA KA NAMAN NG ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES!..
..TULAD NG NUCLEAR WASTE, FOREST CRIME, COMMERCIAL WHALING..
J.Tejido 12-02
WALA KA TULOY NALALAMAN SA MUNDO! PARA MAGKAR'ON KA RIN NG MGA PANINIWALA AT PRINSIPYO!
MERON NAMAN, TAY..
"INNOCENCE IS BLISS!"

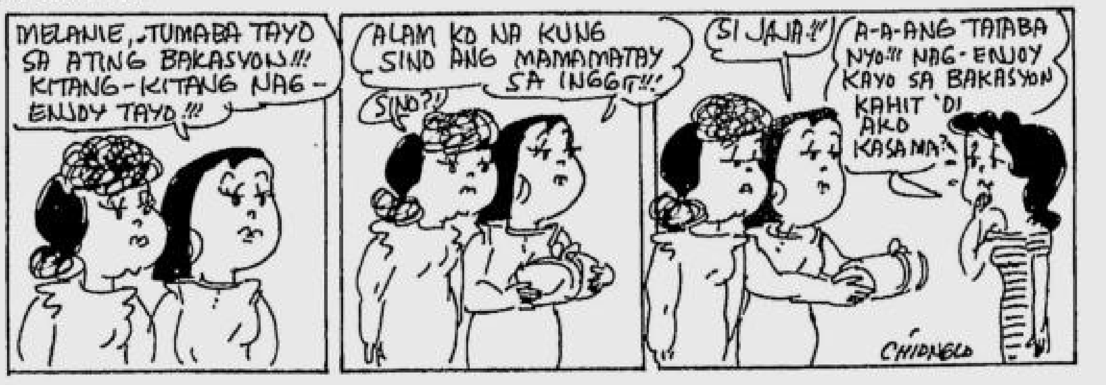
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ETO NA..
MALALAMAN KO NA SCORE KO SA EXAM..
DAPAT DAHAN-DAHAN ANG PAGBUKAS..
TIPONG SA MGA T.V. GAME SHOW...
SABAYAN NG DASAL
KONTI NA LANG...
MOMENT OF TRUTH! HANDA NA AKO...
BILISAN MO NA KASI!
HEH! 'WAG KA MAKELAM!

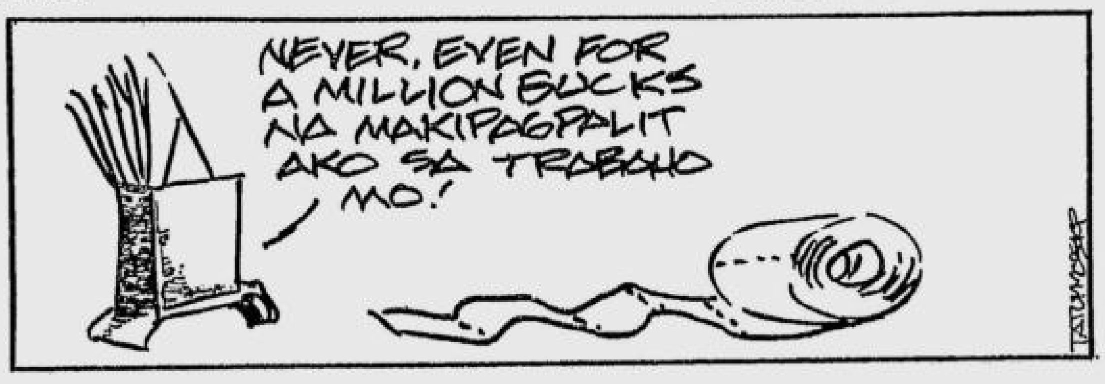
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MELANIE, TUMABA TAYO SA ATING BAKASYON!!! KITANG-KITANG NAG-ENJOY TAYO!!!
ALAM KO NA KUNG SINO ANG MAMAMATAY SA INGGIT!!
SINO?!
SI JAJA!!
A-A-ANG TATABA NYO!!! NAG-ENJOY KAYO SA BAKASYON KAHIT 'DI AKO KASAMA?!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NEVER, EVEN FOR A MILLION BUCKS NA MAKIPAGPALIT AKO SA TRABAHO MO!
TATUM

Viva takes a musical trip down memory lane

By Noelani Torre

MOST if not all of the songs in Viva Records' "The Number One Album" are instantly recognizable to anybody who's ever listened to recent Filipino music. The tracks in this two-CD compilation are, as its own title boasts, "twenty-one modern classics, all number one hits." The number is significant, as it stands for the years that Viva has been in business.

Hit songs

"It has been 21 years since Viva entertainment was born," proclaims the inlay. "Alongside the blockbuster movies, TV shows, concerts and videos, there were also many hit songs created by Viva Records. Here are 21 of these big sellers, recordings that set trends, dominated the airlanes and made singing stars, and which are now part of soundtracks of our lives."

This might be blatant self-advertising, but it's more or less true. These songs were all hits in their day, though we all know that isn't the only indication of a record's ultimate quality. Still, there are a lot of old favorites in the track listing, not the least of which is the first, 1986's "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas," rendered by Sharon Cuneta.

Classic

This song is the earliest (date-wise) in the whole collection, and is indeed a classic, already considered a part of the OPM canon. Sharon's rendition is the most popular and she sings it capably enough. We've heard it sung by a singer with greater range, however, and the song practically soared. Its bittersweet flavor also sets the tone for the rest of the album.

One of the things we noticed about this collection is the predominance of love songs. And even those that don't sound like conventional love ballads—Blakdyak's "Modelong Charing" and Andrew E's "Humanap Ka ng Pangit," for example—still deal with love and relationships.

This is a sentimental compilation, generally speaking, though things tend to get overly sappy at times.

Not all of the songs are OPM. A few, such as "On the Wings of Love" and "We're All Alone," were already old favorites even before Regine Velasquez and Zsa Zsa Padilla's vocal chords labored over their melodies. Still, that doesn't mean that we're given boring rehashes of the originals, not with these two singers on hand.

Regine and Zsa Zsa give us smooth, effortlessly sung interpretations with a lot of extra belting in the right high places, thus rendering the songs their own.

Second CD

The album proves to be a trip down memory lane, especially the second CD, with its early to mid-90s hits. Among these are DJ Alvaro's "Ang Tipo Kong Lalake," "Someone's Always Saying Goodbye" by Allona, Rockstar's "Mahal Pa Rin Kita," and "Humanap Ka ng Pangit" by Andrew E.

"Ang Tipo Kong Lalake" is unforgettable once you've heard it, and we certainly heard it a lot back in '95, when it was first released. It's still a love song, more or less, but with a new twist that remains fresh to this day. Brash but engaging, it ruled the airwaves for quite some time and can still be heard on occasion, especially in the province.

We remember Allona's lament for lost love chiefly because of a former helper of ours, who used to wail it out over and over again. We must admit though that it's quite catchy, in spite of the dampening lyrics, and is in fact attractive because of its generally morose air. Pinoys have always been fans of the "yearning and regretful" school of love songs, truth to tell.

Still popular

Rockstar's "Mahal Pa Rin Kita" is summed up adequately by its title. It's still popular in karaoke and video bars.

As for Andrew E's "Humanap Ka ng Pangit," it brings back memories of the neighborhood *tambay's* chanting. This is probably his most famous take on rap, proving that, then and now, he remains ignorant of that genre's true sound.

Most of the songs are traditional love ballads, including such recent hits as Ogie Alcasid and Regine Velasquez's "Hanggang Ngayon," and "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang" by Pops Fernandez and Freestyle.

Though they're all well-crafted and well-sung pieces, the sameness of subject matter and format tends to take a toll on the listener, so much so that Blakdyak's "Modelong Charing" is welcomed with relief.

It has a catchy melody (from an earlier piece not by the artist), but the lyrics are quite crude. This isn't a song we'd usually endorse, but its being radically different from most of the songs in this album adds a point in its favor.

The last song in this collection is Salbakuta's "S2pid Luv" which we wouldn't endorse under any circumstances. This stomach-turning re-working of a Barbra Streisand tune is another "rap" song that sounds like the farthest thing from it. It's not a good ending to what would have been a fairly OK compilation—but it *is* a hit, which just shows how untrustworthy public opinion can be at times.

CUNETA. Reprises her 1986 hit, "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas."

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Asian films click at Sundance

PARK CITY, Utah—Asian films have made a splash at this year's Sundance Film Festival, including a wrenching Chinese AIDS documentary and an epic Thai film produced by top US director Francis Ford Coppola.

Remarkable record

Filmmaker Chen Wei-jun's remarkable record of a family in rural China's dignified battle to survive with AIDS, "To Live Is Better Than to Die," sparked a wave of industry "buzz" and made Chen one of the festival's stars.

"It is one of the most incredible and heart-breaking records of humanity I have ever seen," said a festival official who requested anonymity.

"It has had a tremendous impact on audiences here and I'm convinced it will work commercially tóo," she added.

The film, shot digitally and shown to sold-out houses here, is simple but powerful, throwing light on an area of life in China that remains both politically and socially sensitive at home.

Chen and his film editor came to Park City this week to unveil the movie after Sundance executives managed to unblock a diplomatic deadlock and pressure US officials into granting him a visa following an initial refusal.

Stroke of luck

"It was a stroke of luck to get him here to present his film, but it was well worth it," the Sundance official.

The historical Thai spectacular "Legend of Suriyothai," directed by Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol, is the most expensive and highest grossing Thai movie ever made, with estimates of its cost ranging from $8.8 to $25 million, reports say.

COPPOLA. Re-edited two scenes of Thai film for US audiences.

Two scenes of the three-hour long film were re-edited for US audiences by Oscar-winning director Coppola, who also produced the picture in the United States.

The epic tells the story of fabled Thai heroine Queen Suriyothai, who was killed in a 1548 battle against Burmese invaders.

Using splendid digitally generated effects, the ambitious film played to more than 1,000 people in Park City, including Coppola and the film's royal director. It is to be distributed by Sony Pictures Classics.

Other Asian films are also faring well here.

Chinese director Zhang Yuan's "I Love You," which has performed extremely well in China, was also very warmly received at Sundance, despite Zhang's absence.

"Missing Gun," the first film from another emerging Chinese filmmaker Lu Chuan, the story of a small-town policeman's symbolic lost pistol, was also applauded here and has won a US distribution contract from Sony Pictures.

Industry interest

Other films generating industry interest at this festival packed by Hollywood scouts was Canada's drama "Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity," directed by Mina Shum, a story set in of Vancouver's Chinese community.

Also well received was director Jeremy Wooding's "Bollywood Queen," an Indian musical that fuses eastern and western cultures through its setting in Britain's Indian community.

Japanese director Masahiko Nagasawa also boasts a talked-about film at this year's Sundance with "The Thirteen Steps," a challenging story of two men linked by a disturbing tale of capital punishment.

Sundance officials are proud of this year's Asian films but insist that the large Asian contingent is simply the result of the independent festival's long-standing interest in Asian and other overseas filmmakers.

AFP

Warner Bros. posts record year overseas

LOS ANGELES—One of Hollywood's top movie studios, Warner Bros. Pictures, said Friday that 2002 was its most successful year ever.

Fifth time

The studio said it had raked in around $1.6 billion in international ticket receipts by the end of November, marking the second-highest total ever after 20th Century Fox's 1998 total of 1.97 billion, fueled by "Titanic." The overseas takings also marked just the fifth time that Warners has earned more than a billion dollars at the box office.

"The fact that we are up almost 20 percent over last year, which was our biggest year ever to date, speaks volumes to the quality of our films," said the studio's distribution president Veronika Kwan-Rubinek.

"We had a great slate of films to work with this year and were able to stand out from the crowd, bringing awareness and audiences to our releases," added marketing president Sue Kroll.

The studio's top five money-spinning titles of last year was headed by the second "Harry Potter" movie "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," which took $476.1 million globally.

Second place

In second place was the studio's all-star adventure flick "Ocean's Eleven"—starring George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon and Andy Garcia—with $256.1 million.

The first "Harry Potter" movie, known as "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" in many countries outside of the United States, took $195 million.

In fourth place was the live-action feature film based on the "Scooby-Doo" cartoon characters which took $122.1 million, followed by 2001's "Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings" with $91.2 million.

The announcement came as Hollywood's top movie studios stood poised to post a record year, with upwards of $9.2 billion in ticket receipts despite a US economic slump and rampant movie piracy, according to industry sources.

Final figures

Final figures, including the domestic North American figures, are expected out next week.

The top studios were buoyed by hits such as Fox's "Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones," Steven Spielberg's futuristic "Minority Report" starring Tom Cruise and its animated "Ice Age."

Also boosting revenues were Disney's animated "Monsters, Inc." and "Signs," starring Mel Gibson, as well as Universal's Oscar-winning "A Beautiful Mind" starring Russell Crowe, and its Hannibal Lecter sequel "Red Dragon," starring Anthony Hopkins.

AFP

Playwrights on writing, and theater in general

By Noelani Torre

"WHAT terrifies you?" asks Edward Albee's interviewer in "The Playwright's Art: Conversations with Contemporary American Dramatists" (Rutgers University Press). "Not being asked wonderful questions," quips the irrepressible playwright.

Fear

As readers, we share his fear, especially when we're reading a collection of interviews—which is what "Playwright's Art" is. Thankfully, though the questions are sometimes less than wonderful, the book remains intriguing all throughout.

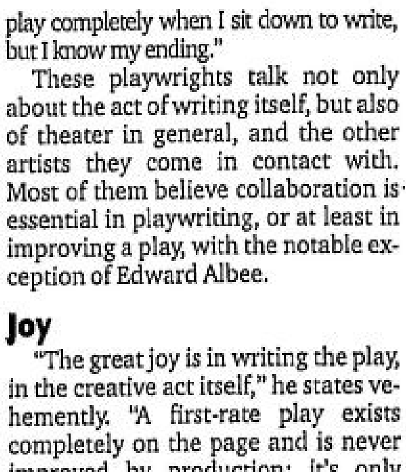
Fifteen American playwrights are showcased here—a fair mix of old reliables and newer voices. Aside from Albee, they are Alice Childress, A.R. Gurney, David Henry Hwang, Jerome Lawrence, Ntozake Shange, Jean-Claude van Itallie, Robert Anderson, John Guare, Beth Henley, Larry L. King, Terrence McNally, Neil Simon, Wendy Wasserstein, and Lanford Wilson.

Mysteries

"These interviews," writes editor Jackson R. Bryer, "deal with the mysteries of that 'irrational act' [playwriting], as well as with the changing face of the American theater during the past half century."

The selection of playwrights is itself a reflection of this "changing face," not only because of their varied dramatic output, but also because of their backgrounds. David Hwang, for example, is Chinese-American, and Ntozake Shange is black and a woman—facts that would have impeded their success 50 years earlier.

"Creativity is very difficult to talk about," says "Tea and Sympathy" author Robert Anderson. Still, he manages to talk about it passionately, if not clearly. "The bits and pieces come from everything," he admits. "Playwriting is spelled w-r-i-t-i-n-g and a playwright is spelled w-r-i-g-h-t; in other words, to construct . . . I do not know my play completely when I sit down to write, but I know my ending."



NEIL Simon is one of 15 top dramatists interviewed for Bryer's book.

These playwrights talk not only about the act of writing itself, but also of theater in general, and the other artists they come in contact with. Most of them believe collaboration is essential in playwriting, or at least in improving a play, with the notable exception of Edward Albee.

Joy

"The great joy is in writing the play, in the creative act itself," he states vehemently. "A first-rate play exists completely on the page and is never improved by production; it's only proved by production.

"All these people who go around saying that a play is just there for actors and directors to turn into a work of art—that's nuts. The creative act, the writing of the play when a playwright sees it and hears it performed on a stage as he writes it, is the best production he'll ever see of a play of his that's any good."

In contrast, Pulitzer Prize-winner Beth Henley admits that she enjoys the rehearsal process. "[B]ecause that's what theatre is about," she explains. "It's this collaborative art, and you get to see other people enhance your work.

"Sometimes they 'de-hance' your work, but it's just thrilling when someone throws an insight into something that you didn't know was there, or when the melody of the lines goes together exactly right."

The playwrights also talk about critics ("The R-rated part of the conversation," cracks Neil Simon), their production contributions, the film versions of their works, and the many changes that have innundated American theater.

These interviews were conducted by different people (some of them critics and some the heads of theater groups), but coherence was established by including a number of common questions for the playwrights to answer. These included the aforementioned "what terrifies you?" as well as the very basic "why did you become a playwright?"

Exciting

"I think there was something about the desire to create worlds and see them appear physically in front of me that seemed to be exciting to me," says David Hwang in answer to the latter.

"I'm not sure that it's such a great thing really; there's something megalomaniacal about it . . . To some degree it's a substitute or compensation for the fact that you don't actually have that much control over people in life."

Terrence McNally's reply to that same question is a juicy read, chock-full of personal insights and about four pages long. "I think it was to torment my parents," he begins. "I always liked writing, and for quite a while I thought I was going to be a journalist. But I think, in my heart of hearts I always really wanted to be a playwright."

Though the book in general remains coherent, we must say that the alphabetical arrangement of the interviews subtracts from that coherence. The editor should have arranged them with an eye towards chronology, as it would have been easier for us readers to relate the playwrights with their immediate contemporaries and theatrical history in general.

Putting aside such quibbles, however, these are very insightful interviews, made so not only by the interviewees' singular responses, but also by the interviewers' informal but well-informed approach.

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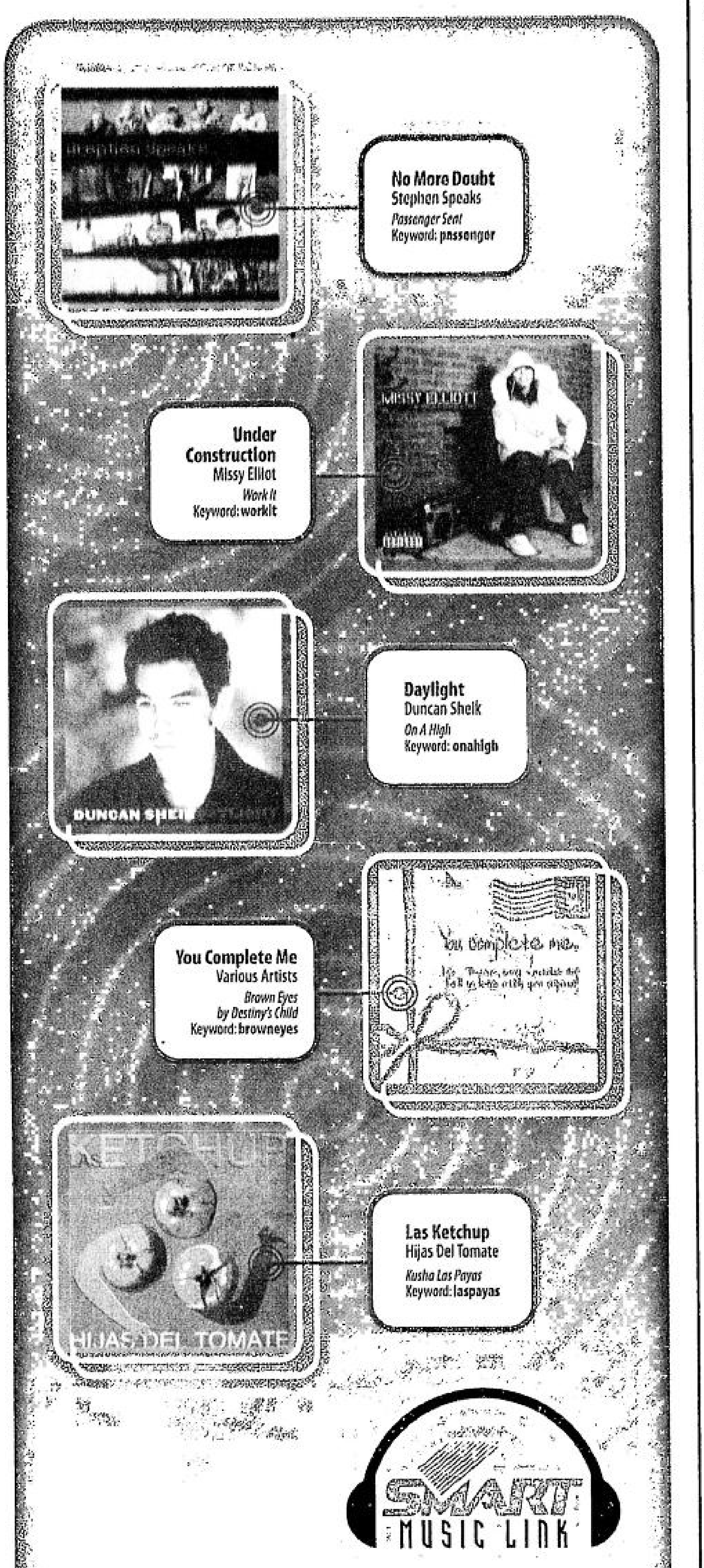

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SATURDAYSpecial

Zhang Yimou almost didn't make 'Hero'

ZHANG: Childhood dream

By Annie Huang

TAIPEI, Taiwan—Zhang Yimou, one of China's best-known film directors, recently said he almost abandoned his childhood dream to make a martial arts movie following the success of Ang Lee's Academy Award-winning "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

Worried

Zhang said he was worried that his epic film "Hero" would be overshadowed after Lee's film "ignited a fire all over the world," sweeping box offices internationally and winning four Oscars, including Best Foreign Film in 2001.

"I thought I would put my dream aside," said Zhang, who arrived in Taipei last Saturday to attend "Hero's" premiere.

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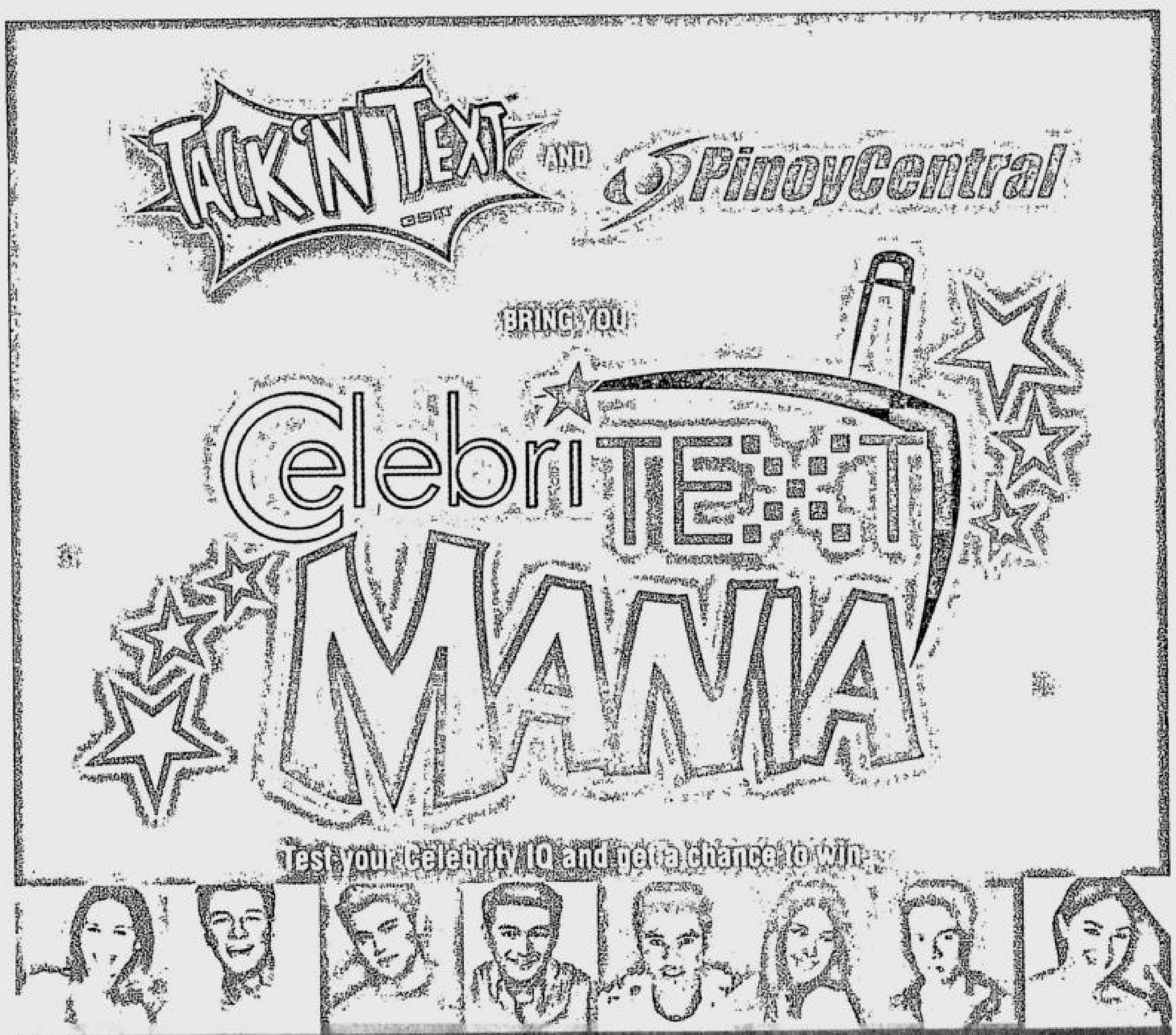

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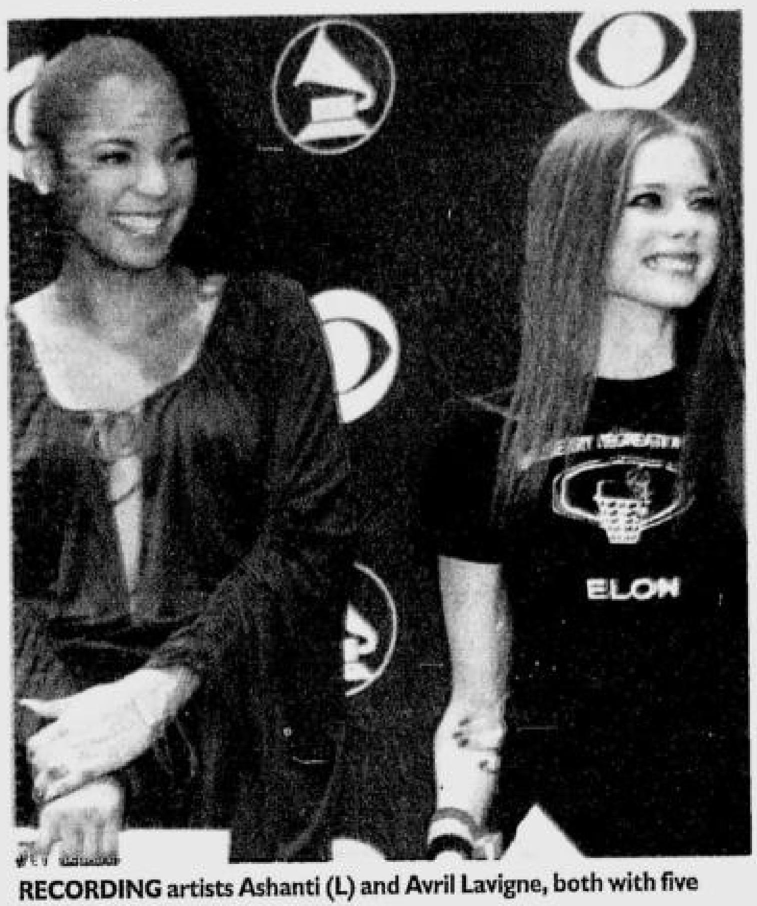
Eight artists get five Grammy nominations apiece



RECORDING artists Ashanti (L) and Avril Lavigne, both with five Grammy nominations.

AFP

By Nekesa Mumbi Moody

NEW YORK—The Recording Academy spread the Grammy wealth, awarding a leading five nominations to eight different artists, including Bruce Springsteen, Eminem, Nelly, Norah Jones and Avril Lavigne.

Major categories

The quintet dominated the major categories, scoring at least one nomination each in record, song or album of the year categories.

Of all the nominees, perhaps Jones' nominations were the most notable; the pop-jazz chanteuse's "Come Away With Me," wasn't expected to go gold and got little support from radio, yet managed to sell 2.7 million copies.

Now it's nominated for album of the year, and Jones, 23, is up for best new artist, among other nominations.

"Every month has been another high point. It's definitely sort of the capper, the icing on the cake, and it's pretty cool and pretty big . . . It's definitely the cherry on top," a giddy Jones said of her nominations.

A hodgepodge of genres and artists received multiple nominations. The other artists receiving five nominations apiece were perennial Grammy favorite Sheryl Crow, neosoul singer-songwriter Raphael Saadiq, and R&B newcomer Ashanti.

First time

Grammy officials believed it was the first time eight artists had tied for the most nominations.

Among the quadruple and triple nominees: Vanessa Carlton, India.Arie, Johnny Cash, Dr. Dre, the Dixie Chicks and Alan Jackson.

"It's nice that people from different genres are reflected in different categories," said Carlton, whose "A Thousand Miles" was nominated for record and song of the year.

Eminem had the year's top-selling album with "The Eminem Show," and was rewarded with a nomination for album of the year and rap album of the year. His "Without Me" was nominated for record of the year, and Eminem was also nominated in two other rap categories and for a music video award.

Besides Eminem and Jones, Springsteen's Sept. 11-inspired disc, "The Rising," received a nomination for album of the year, along with rapper Nelly's "Nellyville" and the Dixie Chicks' "Home."

The Dixie Chicks' disc also received a nomination for country album of the year, among other nods.

Big day

It was a big day for Lavigne, an 18-year-old Canadian who was nominated for best new artist, along with Jones, Ashanti, Michelle Branch and John Mayer—a group of singer-songwriters.

Nelly also had a big day; his song "Dilemma," featuring Destiny's Child member Kelly Rowland, was cited for record of the year; he also was nominated in three rap categories.

Nickelback's "How You Remind Me" rounded out the record of the year category—lead singer Chad Kroeger also got three other nominations, including best song written for a movie ("Hero" from "Spider-Man").

Summer hit

Among Crow's nominations: best female pop vocal performance for her feel-good summer hit, "Soak Up the Sun.

Saadiq's five nominations may have been one of the morning's biggest surprises; the former Tony! Toni! Tone! singer released his debut album, "Instant Vintage," but it was a poor seller.

One notable omission was Josh Groban. Like Jones, his debut album sold 2.7 million copies with little radio airplay and was a surprise success story.

The awards, in 104 categories, are to be handed out Feb. 23 at Madison Square Garden.

AP

THEY WRITE THE SCRIPTS

Edgar Ilao, screenwriter with a sense of reality

By Rica Arevalo

EDGAR Ilao, 34, is a pharmacy graduate of the University of Santo Tomas and is currently doing his MBA thesis. He has worked as a medical representative, college instructor, bar owner, and now runs his own software company.

He started writing scripts when he attended the 1997 scriptwriting workshop at the former Film Development Foundation of the Philippines. His film credits include "Ika-13 Kapitulo," "Alas-Dose," "Hibla" and "Sukdulan." His screenplay, "Pulitiko" won Third Prize in the FDFPI Screenwriting Competition and "Deep Penetration Agent (DPA)" was a finalist in the Second Star Cinema Screenwriting Competition.

Attitude

What should be the attitude of a writer to get film projects? He says, "Aside from persistence and determination (and a day job), a writer aspiring to work for film studios should have a sense of reality.

"Most of the time, the death knell for new writers who are lucky enough to get one foot inside the door is when they create the impression of being hardheaded and inflexible, or to put it euphemistically, 'refuse to compromise artistic ideals.'

"Not that there isn't room for ideals in the industry. But for commissioned scripts, a writer needs to subordinate his own creative impulses to the vision of the director and to the requirements of the producer, because they are the customers."

Aside from delivering the "goods," talent and work ethic should also prevail. His relationship with his director has been limited to the script development phase but he adds, "I consider it to be very productive and harmonious. I look to my director as a guiding hand during the script's development. I don't resent his opinions and suggestions. In fact, I try to understand the director's vision for the film so that I can realize it more effectively."

Fulfillment

Like many of other writers, Ilao finds fulfillment in telling stories and believes that movies are the best way to realize his vision. "The greatest gain for me personally is the satisfaction I get when the film is finally shown. Knowing that most of it started inside my mind still gives me a thrill. My dream from the start was to have at least one of my scripts realized as a film. Now, I'm quite happy to work on a project whenever I can get one."

The challenge for aspiring writers has been, and will always be, how to penetrate the market. Ilao shares the answers: talent, determination, a good work ethic, a sense of reality, and a willingness to keep on learning.

ILAO. Wrote the screenplay for the current film, "Sukdulan."

Filmfest highlights 'celebration of all things British'

By Nestor U. Torre

ONGOING until Feb. 4 at Shangri-La Plaza Mall's Cinema 1 is the British Council's UK Film Festival, a "must" event for movie buffs. Five cinematic gems will be screened. They are:

Teen comedy

- "Bend It Like Beckham," a comedy about bending the rules to get what you want. Award-winning director Gurinder Chadha ("Bhaji on the Beach," "What's Cooking?") tells the story of two 18-year-olds of different color and culture who dream of playing football professionally and are on their way with the help of their coach until—they both fall in love with him!

The film stars Parminder K. Nagra, Keira Knightley, Jonathan Rhys-Meyer, Juliet Stevenson and Frank Harper. It won the audience vote for best film at the Sydney Film Festival and the Prix du Public audience award at the Locarno Film festival.

- "Born Romantic," David Kane's film about the amorous adventures of six young salsa enthusiasts.

Unfamiliar country

- "Last Resort," the compelling story of a young Russian woman who travels to an unfamiliar country to reunite with her fiancé. Instead, she finds herself in a "waking nightmare." The movie is directed by Pawel Pawillkowski.
- "Love and Death on Long Island," Richard Kwietniowski's funny and touching film based on Gilbert Adair's novel.
- "Divorcing Jack," a comic thriller by David Caffrey which revolves around a murder mystery.

Screenings are at 1, 5 and 8 p.m. Schedule:

Saturday, Feb. 1 at 1 p.m., "Divorcing Jack." 5 p.m., "Bend It Like Beckham." 8 p.m., "Born Romantic."

Sunday, Feb. 2 at 1 p.m., "Bend It Like Beckham." 5 p.m., "Born Romantic." 8 p.m., "Last Resort."

Monday, Feb. 3 at 1 p.m., "Love and Death on Long Island." 5 p.m., "Last Resort." 8 p.m., "Born Romantic."

Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 1 p.m., "Last Resort." 5 p.m., "Divorcing Jack." 8 p.m., "Bend It Like Beckham." Call 635-2079 for details.

Other activities in the ongoing UK Fortnight "celebration of all things British" (until Feb. 9) include Literary Public Readings at Eastwood City Walk (Feb. 1), Remedios Cirle (Feb. 7) and Shangri-La Plaza Mall (Feb. 8).

"BEND It Like Beckham" is a teen comedy.

Literary works

Mumbai-born Atima Srivastava, Britport Arts Short Story Competition winner, and Chinese-born novelist Hong Ying team up to showcase literary works about women seeking love and success.

Food from UK is being highlighted by the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel until Feb. 6 at its Garden Café, which features British cooking in a special culinary showcase. British chef Philip John Golding will conduct a Cooking Demonstration at the Manila Peninsula Hotel on Feb.1.

At the British Council's Information Center, outstanding BBC TV shows will be shown from Feb. 5 to 8. They include "Walking with Dinosaurs," Episodes 1 and 2; "Wallace and Grommit" episodes; "Absolutely Fabulous," Episodes 1 and 2; "Pride and Prejudice," Episodes 1 to 6, and "Fawlty Towers."

On Feb. 7, the British Embassy honors its Chevening scholars in a formal ceremony. A two-day Education Fair will be held at the Manila Pen on Feb. 8 and 9. Attendees can sample various educational software anchored on Computer Games developed and published in the UK—"Harry Potter," "Lord of the Rings," "Sim City 4," "Tomb Raider," "1503 A.D. The New World," "Spring Break," etc. And a Creative Writing Workshop is scheduled at Silliman University in Dumaguete City from Feb. 3 to 5.

"BORN Romantic" focuses on young salsa enthusiasts.

Hollywood's other dancing stars recalled

By Behn Cervantes

MITZI Gaynor started out as a teeny-bopper who was cute and perky, but eventually grew into a fine leading lady of various musicals. She also appeared in dramatic roles in movies like "The Joker Is Wild" with Frank Sinatra, who had his fair share of hoofing roles including "On The Town" where he pitted his skill with Gene Kelly, no less.

Nurse

Gaynor's dancing career culminated with her portrayal of American nurse Nelly Forbush, who couldn't wash the man right of her hair but instead fell in love with him, a French plantation owner (Rossano Brazzi), in "South Pacific."

Certainly, the most stunning of the tap dancers was Ann Miller, who could tap like a machine gun and twirl like a top without missing a beat. She made everything look easy.

MILLER. Made everything look easy.

Her co-starring role in "Kiss Me Kate" added zing to the movie, where virile baritone Howard Keel and buxom coloratura Kathryn Grayson sang fine Cole Porter numbers with great aplomb. She was a stunning looker who owned the shapeliest pair of legs to adorn the screen.

She was a vibrant dancing presence in other musicals like "Easter Parade," "Deep In My Heart," "Life of the Party," "Kissing Bandit" and "Jam Session."

Hoofer

James Cagney, who is one of the movie capital's most successful "gangsters," was also quite a hoofer. In fact, he won an Academy Award for "Yankee Doodle Dandy," where he danced up a storm as George M. Cohan.

Of course, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, being products of the vaudeville stage, could sing and dance when required—although Hope decided to add comedy to his act to offset the overwhelming odds in favor of his crooner-partner, Bing. Both sang, danced and made faces all the way to the bank, making many millions during their successful careers.

Even nervous James Stewart did a little hoofing, as did Cary Grant during those years when actors were expected to sing, dance and act when their roles required them to. Super moppet Shirley Temple is remembered for having danced her heart out to producers' great delight, and her charm and sense of precision made her cutesy sequences box-office attractions.

Role model

Of course, products of Hollywood musical training like Mickey Rooney and the great Judy Garland could out-hoof anyone who came within reach. They had a good role model in Eleanor Powell, who was the movie capital's greatest tap dancer until Ann Miller came along.

Other young Hollywood stars like Van Johnson, June Allyson and soprano Jane Powell could dance with the best of them with verve and vigor. They would end those dances smiling as fresh as Esther Williams as she came out of a large swimming pool after taking a 40-foot dive from an airplane into the pink flamingo-flecked Florida Swamps.

The musical stars danced in the dark, on trains, on wagons and on busy streets, whether it be sunny or raining. Dance was very much a part of the Hollywood scene and great musicals were standard family entertainment.

The great MGM musicals are a thing of the past, unless "Moulin Rouge" and "Chicago" start a fad and bring back the grand and elaborate movies that celebrated life through song and dance.

If they succeed, the likes of Raquel Welch, Kim Bassinger, Cheryl Ladd and other "secret" dancers will be eager to follow in the dancing footsteps of Astaire, Kelly, O'Connor, Charisse and Miller.

Zhang Yimou almost didn't make 'Hero'

From page F1

But he says he decided to persevere, knowing comparisons with Lee were inevitable, and because international interest in martial-arts films brought him funding.

Set at the violent dawn of the Qin dynasty, circa 220 B.C., "Hero" is a tale of love, jealousy and rivalry as China's soon-to-be first emperor battles his opponents.

Nominated

The movie has already become a box-office hit in both China and Hong Kong and has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

It stars China's best-known martial-arts master Jet Li, Hong Kong actress Maggie Cheung, actor Tony Leung, and Zhang Ziyi, who had a supporting role in "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

Zhang Yimou focused on shooting art films in the 1980s when the trend in the industry was to make films that were "a retrospection of the times" and martial-arts films were despised as "commercial and entertaining," he said.

He said China, where Zhang's films have come under close scrutiny by censors, actually proved an advantage in shooting a martial-arts movie.

"You can arrange to have any characters killed or handled in any way you'd like. They were figures of a long time ago after all. All of a sudden, you are free from restraints," said Zhang, whose credits include "Raise the Red Lantern" and "Ju Dou."

The film was touted as Zhang's most visually ambitious project, but the director said he tried to avoid the bloody battle scenes featured in many Hollywood movies.

Wonder of speed

"The martial-arts world cherishes swiftness, the wonder of speed. Top swordsmen fight and then they stop and back away, leaving you to think hard about who wins and who loses," said Zhang. "Only thugs battle to the end."

In "Hero," an assassin attempts to kill the would-be emperor to avenge the murders of his family members. But he changes his mind at the last minute, hoping the future emperor might become a good leader, apparently a twist on Chinese history.

"A man who gives up a ploy may be more of a hero than one who actually takes the revenge," Zhang said.

AP

Viewers cite outstanding male newscasters on local TV

By Noelani Torre

DESPITE technological leaps in the field of information gathering and dissemination, the newscaster still has a long way to go before he becomes obsolete. People want to hear important news from people they can see, hear, and, in a way, relate to.

Authority figures

Newscasters are authority figures—people have a lot of faith in them, and on the news that they deliver. Still, not everything is due to the position—a good deal of the trust that viewers place on a newscaster is based on what they perceive to be his qualities.

We have many seemingly conscientious newscasters in our local networks—all of them, they would have us believe, the best in their field. Mistrustful of all that hype, we set out to ask viewers to tell us who they think is the best male newscaster on local TV today. Here are some of their picks:

No affectations

"The best male newscaster for me is Julius Babao. I like the timbre of his voice, because it falls easily on the ear. I think he is the best because he's natural and speaks very matter-of-factly, with no affectations. He stands out from the rest who are like walking tabloid headlines.

"They are too sensationalistic for newscasting—their style doesn't go with it. It should be serious because news is serious, especially nowadays, and Julius Babao has the voice and the look more suited to it."—*Sheryl Escultura, Paranaque.*

No side comments

"Frank Evangelista. *Matagal na siya sa industriya at* so far *wala pa akong nababalitaang masama tungkol sa kanya, walang mga iskandalo*, etc. *Mataas na ang* position *niya sa* network *at di naman siguro siya aabot doon kung di maganda ang* performance *niya.*

"*Magaling siyang mag*-report—*naiintindihan mo talaga ang sinasabi niya at nakatutok ka sa* news. *Sina* Erwin Tulfo *kasi, nagsa*-side-comment *minsan. Si* Frank, *'pag* straight news *di siya nagko*-comment.

"*Yung* intonation *at* timing (*kung kailan siya magpo*-pause, etc.) *niya, laging tama. Di katulad nung masyadong mabilis na pananalita ni* Mike Enriquez *na hindi talaga nag-a*-appeal *sa akin. Naiirita ako kasi di* smooth *ang pakikinig mo.*

"*Si* Aljo Bendijo *sana* OK, *kaso sumasablay pa siya minsan sa kanyang* Visayan accent.

"Frank is a credible newscaster. *Isa na siya sa mga* pillars *ng* newscasting."—*Faith Noval, Diliman.*

Credible

"I think Frank Evangelista is the best. He seems to have a strong personality. He delivers the news confidently. He doesn't take sides, unlike other newscasters, like Erwin Tulfo and before, Noli de Castro. There is something very credible about his appearance. He's old—mature—and he has been in newscasting for years.

"When he delivers the news, he's really neutral. He is an example of what a good newscaster should be. These days, most newscasters don't follow the code anymore, which is to be as neutral and objective as possible. Their job is to deliver the news, and just that.

"My only complaint with Frank is that I sometimes don't understand what he's saying because his voice gets too husky."—*Johann Malong, Manila.*

Fearless

"*Gusto ko si* Erwin Tulfo *kasi matapang siya. Wala siyang takot sa mga kaaway niya.*

"*Hindi ka mabo*-bore *'pag nakikinig ka sa kanya kasi hindi* monotonous *yung boses niya. Hindi lang siya nagbabalita, isa rin siyang taong kapaki-pakinabang sa lipunan kasi marami siyang nasusupil na mga kabalastugan sa lipunan.*

"Assertive *siya kung i*-compare *mo sa iba. May sarili siyang paninindigan. Bagay sa itsura niya—sa* build, *mukha—ang* attitude *niya. Mas kapani-paniwala keysa sa matapang din pero maliit na* newscaster *sa* GMA."—*Genevieve Carolino, Baguio City.*

Experience

"Frank Evangelista, I think. First, because he's old. Young people don't like that, but age makes a person credible, especially in newscasting. He has a lot of experience in the field, and he's very familiar to most of us because he has been a newscaster for a long time.

"I like the calm way he delivers the news. That's the way it should be delivered, not the way these younger newscasters do it—too sensationalistic! It doesn't sound good. They make the news sound cheap. Frank is firm, but he doesn't have 'special effects' like that.

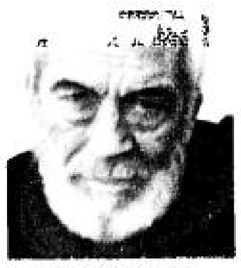
"I also like his voice, because it is so different from the rest. It's not smooth, but it sounds more believable. His pronunciation is very good. I find it very nice to listen to him delivering the news, especially after I hear the younger newscasters."—*Elisabeth Almonte, Cagayan de Oro.*

EVANGELISTA. Objective.

BABAO. Natural.

John Huston honored in Ireland

DUBLIN—A university in Ireland has announced plans to name a film school after the late Hollywood screen director John Huston in tribute to his close links with the country.



HUSTON. Movie legend.

Movie legend

The National University of Ireland in Galway said the Huston Film School would be dedicated to the memory of the movie legend who made his home in the west of Ireland in the 1950s and drew inspiration for many of his films from the surrounding area.

Huston, who made more than 50 films in a career spanning 60 years before he died in 1987, will be the subject of a gala banquet in Los Angeles in May to raise scholarship funds for the school, which will open its doors to students this autumn.

His actress daughter Anjelica said the project "recognizes the deep relationships that bind Ireland and California, both past and present.

Major part

"St. Cleran's was a major part of our family's life," she said, referring to the 19th century country-house inn in Galway that was once the family home.

"The Huston School will ensure that Ireland continues to bring its many creative talents to a world audience," she added.

Huston is best known for movie classics such as "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," "The Asphalt Jungle" and "African Queen."

His last film "The Dead" was based on the closing story of James Joyce's Dubliners, and also starred Anjelica.
Reuters

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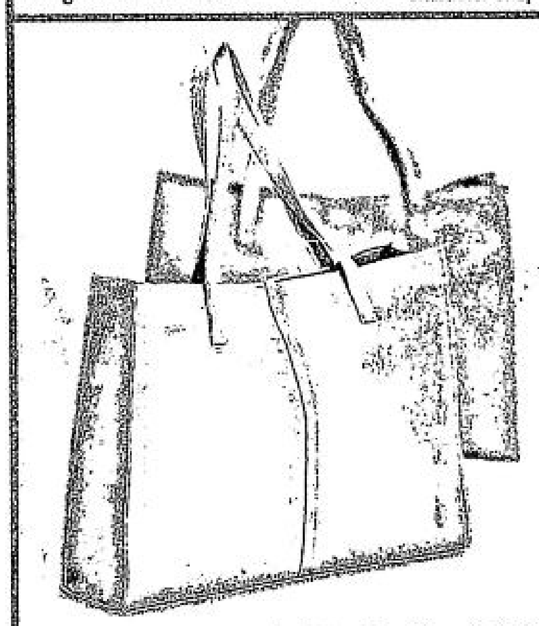

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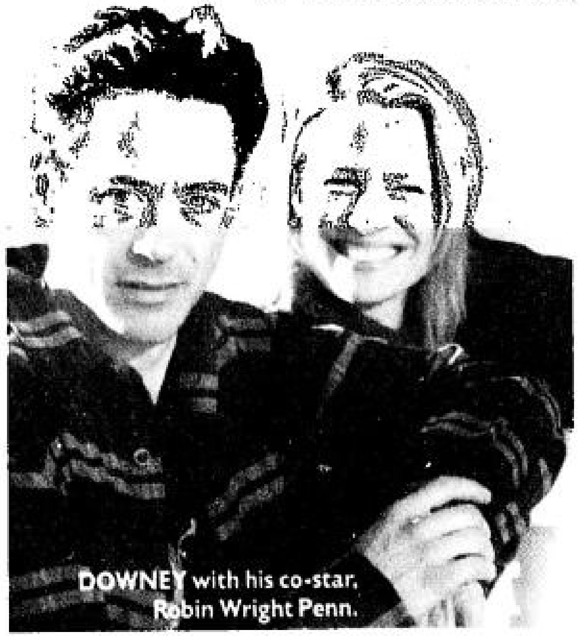


DOWNEY with his co-star, Robin Wright Penn.

Clean and sober, Downey makes strong comeback with 'Singing Detective'

By David Germain

PARK CITY, Utah—Robert Downey Jr. understands the public's curiosity with his past drug and alcohol troubles. The self-deprecating actor even beats people to the punch to toss out a wisecrack.

Title character

"Thank you, I'll be drunk by 10," Downey told an audience at the Sundance Film Festival over the weekend, after a viewer asked him what he drew from his own life to help play the title character in "The Singing Detective," his first film since completing probation and rehabilitation that followed years of substance abuse.

"The Singing Detective" is a strong comeback for Downey, 37, an Academy Awards nominee for 1992's "Chaplin" and an Emmy nominee for "Ally McBeal," a TV gig he ultimately lost because of ongoing drug arrests.

Adapted by Dennis Potter from his 1986 miniseries, "The Singing Detective" is a film-noir musical fantasy about a mystery writer afflicted with a disease that attacks the joints and causes agonizing skin psoriasis. Potter, who died in 1994, suffered from the same disease.

Fantasies

Downey's character flits from bedridden reality, to fantasies where he's a tough, crooning gumshoe, to painful recollections of childhood trauma.

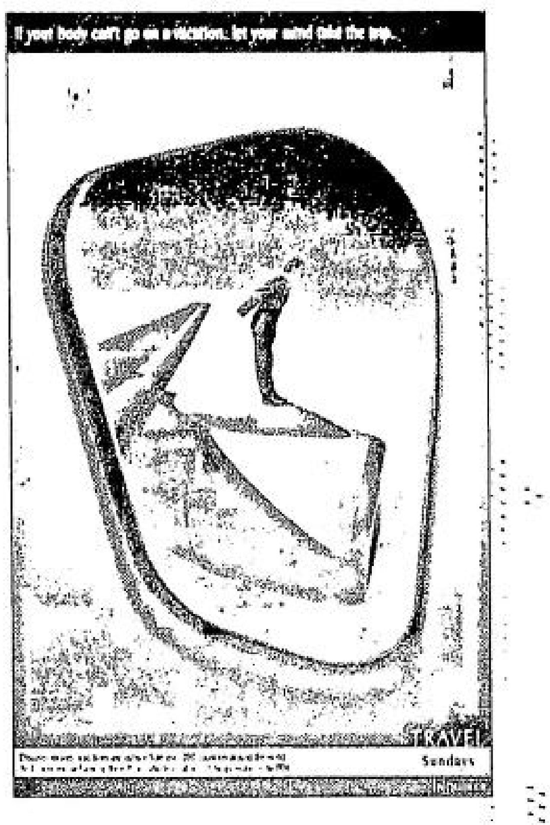
The actor said his own experiences—including a stay at a rehab center that followed a year in prison—gave him inspiration to tackle Potter's deliciously cynical character.

"Sure, there's that whole idea of being able to use an affliction as a weapon, and there's nothing better for someone who's abused drugs as frequently as I," Downey said. "The best defense is a good offense."

"The Singing Detective" co-stars Robin Wright Penn, Katie Holmes, Jeremy Northam and Mel Gibson, whose company produced the film. The producers premiered it at Sundance hoping to land a distributor to put the film into theaters.

Downey's legal troubles began in 1996 when police found cocaine, heroin and a pistol in his vehicle. Years of probation, drug treatment and periodic arrests followed. Last summer, Downey ended probation after satisfying a judge he had been clean and sober for

CLEAN/ G2



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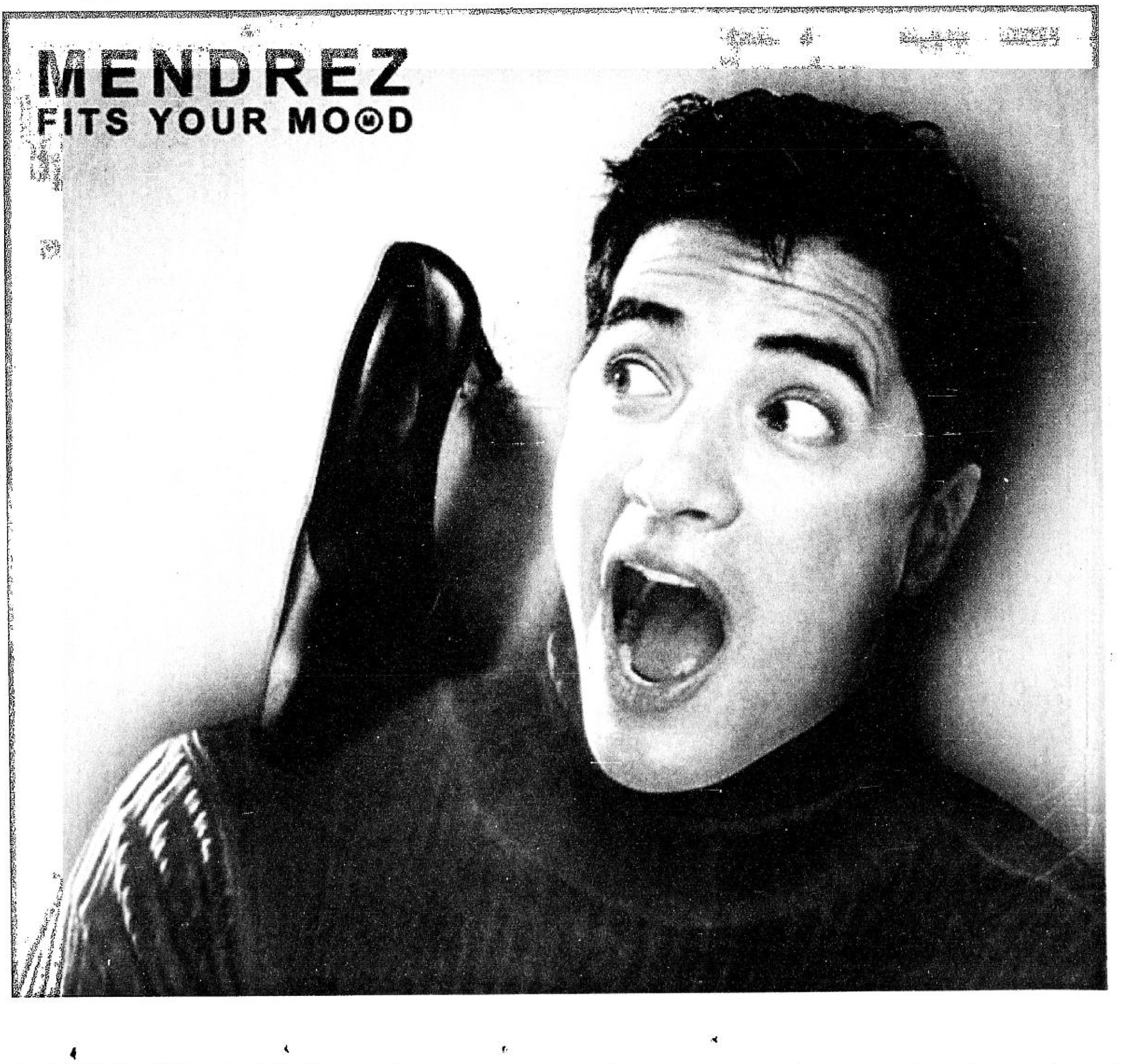

MENDREZ
FITS YOUR MOOD

Another enjoyable interview with Jackie Chan

By Edmund L. Sicam

IT'S hard not to like action superstar Jackie Chan. The first time I interviewed him in Hong Kong for "Shanghai Noon" two years ago, he didn't have the air of a superstar.

He looked like he was enjoying the interview, and though he had some difficulty with the English language (at one point, he had to ask his manager Willie Chan to translate my question, "What physical attributes do you find attractive in a woman?" His answer, by the way, was "She must be tall and thin."), I understood what he was trying to communicate.

Unlike many Hollywood stars who are all business, Jackie was very accommodating, gamely posing with journalists for photographs and signing autographs

Journal

Several weeks ago, the local office of Buena Vista invited me to another film junket in Taipei. When they told me that it was for "Shanghai Knights" and Jackie Chan, I looked forward to the occasion.

To prepare myself for the junket, I visited Jackie's official website and noticed that he had a journal detailing his experiences shooting "Shanghai Knights" in places like London and Prague.

I learned some interesting trivia: Jackie brings only three pieces of underwear when he travels and he washes them himself; he's fond of antiques and everywhere he shoots, he buys some for his collection; he actually asked for Eric Clapton's autograph because he's a big fan; he watches a lot of television while waiting in his trailer; he's a good bowler with a personal best of 280 pinfalls.

When I finally joined a group of Asian journalists for the roundtable interview in Taipei, I noticed some changes in the action star. He was still as pleasant as ever despite the fact this was his nth session with the press. He also didn't mind posing with the journalists. I could sense, however, that he was more confident and at home with English.

Jackie admitted that he now uses doubles in his movies. "Only for the wide shots," he explained. "You see only the black shadow, so I'm not gonna do it. Not like the old days when I would do every shot. Today, I still do most of the stunts, but when it's something that I don't know much about, like horseback riding, somebody else does it for me."

"SHANGHAI KNIGHTS." Chan (center) co-stars with Fann Wong (left) and Owen Wilson.

Swordfights

Since he is not an expert at swordfights, the studio brought in a professional to help, but Jackie found his moves too conventional. He ended up doing the scenes himself to make the scenes more exciting and closer to the Chinese style.

Jackie confessed that he wanted to venture into non-action films. "I've been fighting for 40 years. I'm tired of fighting. I want to do other kinds of movies. I want to die in a movie or be a bad guy."

Decades ago, at the height of his popularity in Hong Kong, he had already agreed to star in Chen Kaige's "Farewell, My Concubine," a serious drama about performers in a Chinese opera, but he changed his mind. The movie won critical acclaim in many film festivals.

In his autobiography, "I Am Jackie Chan," he recalls his godfather, the late Leonard Ho of Golden Harvest, telling him, "Audiences aren't ready to accept you as a dramatic actor. You're a star, Jackie, and you're very talented, but while you're young, you should make the most of what you've learned throughout your childhood. Because you won't be young forever."

Jackie turns 48 this year so the star is thinking of other options aside from action pictures. His dream project is to do an epic about Genghis Khan where he won't use special effects to show thousands of warriors. This project was something he wanted to do many years ago but his godfather told him he was not yet ready for serious stuff.

That's how Jackie became famous in the first place. When legendary martial-arts star Bruce Lee passed away, many Chinese actors tried to fill the void. Some producers wanted Jackie to follow Bruce's footsteps, since Jackie was a stuntman in Lee's movies.

Jackie, however, had other plans. He decided to mix action and comedy, and that's how he shot to the top of the heap. Movies like "Snake in the Eagle's Shadow" (1978) and "Drunken Master" (1978) made him a big star in Asia.

Minor hit

He was already a household name in the Orient when he did some Hollywood movies and met one failure after the next. It was only when "Rumble in the Bronx" (1994) became a minor hit that he finally got his foot in the door.

When "Rush Hour" became a monster hit, earning more than $100 million, Jackie became a certified Hollywood star, so much so that even Steven Spielberg invited him to do a movie for Dreamworks. That resulted in "The Tuxedo" where, for a change, we saw special effects in a Jackie Chan movie.

When "Rush Hour" topped the box office, Jackie couldn't understand why it had succeeded. He was even frustrated because the director toned down many of his action scenes. Jackie was used to the slam-bang style of his other movies.

Later on, with the success of "Rush Hour II," he realized that US viewers enjoyed the idea of a buddy film that featured an African-American (Chris Tucker) and an Oriental.

His latest project is another buddy movie "Shanghai Knights," where he bonds one more time with co-star Owen Wilson. His character Chon Wang and Roy O'Bannon (Wilson) travel to London, where the killer of Wang's father has escaped. Wang's sister, Lin, played by Singaporean star Fann Wong, joins the two on their adventures.

The magnificent movie in Michiko Yamamoto's mind

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR the past six years, we have been conducting screenwriting workshops and judging the annual scriptwriting contest of the Film Development Foundation of the Philippines (now the Film Development Council). Some of the workshops' graduates and contest winners have done well on the local TV-film scene, and this has given us a lot of psychic satisfaction.

Script

The latest workshopper to get her script produced is Michiko Yamamoto, whose "Magnifico" is being directed for Violett Films by Maryo J. delos Reyes for showing this month, with Lorna Tolentino, Jiro Manio and Gloria Romero topbilling.

When Filipino-Japanese Michiko took the FDFPI's workshop, she was a fresh college graduate. She was very quiet (as quite a number of writers are) during the first weeks of the course. It was only when we got to our 20-minute script exercise that she came into her own.

After reading all of the 20-minute scripts written by the workshoppers, we decided that five were outstanding, and that Michiko's was the best. So, we had her script read aloud by the whole class.

YAMAMOTO. Inspiring screenplay.

Reading

When the reading was over, many of the workshoppers were in tears. Michiko's short script had moved them that much.

We all complimented the shy, young writer for her exceptional work. Michiko's co-wrokshoppers lauded the significance of her theme, her textured and "all-heart" characters, and her very natural and memorable dialogue.

Michiko was stupefied! Apparently, it was the first time that she had been singled out for anything, and all that praise made her very nervous. She felt like melting!

Comments

But we pointed out that the workshoppers weren't flattering her, they were reacting as an "advance audience" of her work, so she should stop feeling inadequate and undeserving, and take note of their comments, all of which were very positive.

Even better, after the workshop, the FDFPI held its annual feature-length screenwriting contest—and Michiko won first prize with her screenplay for "Magnifico Magikero"! Well, you can imagine how nervous she was when she accepted that award!

For our part, we were completely bowled over when she told us that she had completed her prize-winning full-length screenplay in only one day!

We were totally blown away, because out own "record" for writing a screenplay was three days, and that assignment had completely exhausted us. And yet, here was this young writer who was able to write the script for a 90-minute movie so quickly, *and* win the contest's top prize!

In the succeeding months, whenever we'd get a group scripting project, we included Michiko in our pool of writers. And we introduced her to name directors who could give her her big break.

Freshness

Well, that break has come, thanks to Maryo, who liked Michiko's "Magnifico" script enough to direct it. And another new writer has joined the local film industry to contribute what she can to the freshness and quality of its products. It couldn't happen to a more talented, hardworking, and nicer person.

What's "Magnifico" about? Its lead character (Jiro) is a boy who has a "magical" effect on people's lives because of his goodness—his mother (Lorna), who has to cope with many problems, her mother-in-law (Gloria), who has cancer, a driver grieving over the death of his mother (Mark Gil), a "loose" woman (Amy Austria), etc.

Michiko's upbeat story has inspired Maryo to do his best work. Let's hope that it inspires many viewers as well when it's shown on Feb. 12.

Marissa Sanchez in two wacky Valentine shows

THIS Valentine season, singer-comedienne Marissa Sanchez goes offbeat, sexy, and wacky in two musical-comedy shows for lovers and music buffs with a sense of humor.

SANCHEZ. Naughty and nice.

Initial offerings

The shows are the initial offerings of Golden Circle Ad Com Corp. On Feb. 13 (Thursday), Marissa ignites the stage at Le Pavilion on Roxas blvd. with the Spirit of '67, Ateneo alumni who have reunited to become a popular revival band. Their show is titillating titled "Naughty Me & My Spirit."

Solo show

The next day, Feb. 14, V-Day itself, Marissa has a major solo show, "Diva-stating Valentine," at the ballroom of Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. In the show, Marissa does funny take-offs on the music scene's reigning divas.

They include Kuh Ledesma, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Lea Salonga, Sharon Cuneta, Barbra Streisand, Shirley Bassey and Angela Bofill.

Tickets at all Ticketnet outlets, tel. 911-5555, or at Golden Circle Ad Com, 636-1427, 636-1264; and National Bookstore Ticketworld at 891-5610.

Clean and sober . . .

From page G1

more than a year.

For much of that time, Downey managed to land roles in movies, among them "Bowfinger" and "US Marshals," though it has been three years since his last film, "Wonder Boys."

"He's a very sweet man. That's why people wanted to give him so many chances and why they've stuck with him," said Keith Gordon, director of "The Singing Detective," who costarred with Downey in Rodney Dangerfield's 1980s comedy "Back to School." *AP*

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM FEB 1 - FEB 7

CH	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7	9	13	23	29	33
[illegible]	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:30 Bida si Mister, Bida si Misis 9:30 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 7:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Business and Leisure	7:00 Sailormoon Sailor Stars 7:30 Family Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Saturday Night Specials 11:30 Star Trek Voyager	6:00 Dragon Ball Z 6:30 Imbestigador 7:30 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:30 Kakabakaba 9:30 Blockbuster Cinema *Extranghero* 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Master Showman	6:00 Real TV 6:30 Entertainment Tonite 7:00 Largo 8:00 7 Days 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Thomas*	7:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 8:00 Star For A Night 9:00 Viva Box Office 11:00 Kagat ng Dilim	6:00 Travel Time 6:30 The Beast Machines 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 7th Heaven 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deal	7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras Ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 E! News Weekend 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 E! News Weekend
[illegible]	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Home Along Da Riles 9:30 Sunday Family Cinemas 11:30 Dong Puno Highly 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Unlimited Driving	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price Is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 KI 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Match TV 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Everybody Says I Love You* 11:00 Road Trip	6:00 PBA Games 8:00 Sinemaks 9:30 Viva's Hot Hits 11:00 El Shaddai	6:00 Invasion America 6:30 Digital Tour 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Yes Dear 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The West Wing 10:30 Scariest Places on Earth 11:30 News Central	7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night movies	5:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 E! Original Special 8:00 Rank 9:00 Revealed w/ Jules Asner 10:00 Movies on E!
[illegible]	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Game K N B? 7:00 Bituin 7:30 Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay 8:00 Sa Puso ko, Iingatan Ka 8:30 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:00 Alias 10:30 Night Visions 11:00 Headlines	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 PBL	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Bugs 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Two	6:00 Frontpage 6:40 Habang Kapiling Ka 7:20 Ang Iibigin Ay Ikaw 8:00 Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:40 Kung Mawawala Ka 9:20 Magpakailanman 10:30 Saksi 11:00 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Wyred 6:30 Hot Ticket 7:00 Simpsons 8:00 Jag 9:00 24 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City	6:00 PBA Games 9:00 The Weakest Link 10:00 IBC News 11:00 Ronda Trese	6:00 The Three Stooges 6:30 Voltron:3rd Dimension 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Buffy 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Live 7:00 Behind The Scenes 7:30 Mysteries & Scandals 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! News Live 9:30 FYE 10:00 Best of Late Show 11:00 Wild On
[illegible]	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Game K N B? 7:00 Bituin 7:30 Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay 8:00 Sa Puso ko, Iingatan Ka 8:30 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:00 OK Fine! Whatever 10:30 Headlines 11:00 Pipol	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Auto Focus	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Dragon League 7:00 2 Years Vacation w/ Dinosaurs 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 E.R. 9:30 Urban Doktor 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Mad TV	6:00 Frontpage 6:30 Habang Kapiling Ka 7:00 Ang Iibigin Ay Ikaw 7:30 Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Kung Mawawala Ka 8:30 Magpakailanman 9:00 Kool Ka Lang 10:30 Saksi 11:00 Probe Team	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Wyred 6:30 Entertainment Tonite 7:00 Ed 8:00 Ally McBeal 9:00 The Practice 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Real TV	6:00 Carita de Angel 7:00 Crayon Shin Chan 8:00 Kurochan 9:00 The Weakest Link 10:00 Diwa 11:00 IBC News 11:30 Travel and Trade	6:00 The Three Stooges 6:30 Voltron 3rd Dimension 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Dawson's Creek 9:00 Smallville 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Twilight Zone	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Live 7:00 Extreme Close Up 7:30 Mysteries and Scandals 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! News Live 9:30 FYE 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Heartland*
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Jograd dela Torre explores another side of show biz

By Andy P. Bais

SOME of the country's finest musical theater artists jumpstarted their singing and acting careers by appearing in the '80s Filipino musical "Magsimula Ka" by Gines Tan. World-class talents like Robert Seña, Isay Alvarez and Bobby Martino essayed major roles in the musical before their invasion of the West End in London via "Miss Saigon."

Versatile performer

Comedienne Beverly Salviejo, versatile performer Gigi Posadas and TV-film star Rina Reyes were likewise graduates of the long-running musical.

Another product of the well-loved musical is Jograd dela Torre, who was wonderfully effective in his scene-stealing role. Jograd's exceptional talent as a natural comic was evident even during his audition.

The production people had to adjust the musical's script so that his natural gift for making people laugh would be highlighted. As a result, his role in "Magsimula Ka" was written especially for him.

As expected, Jograd didn't fail his discoverers. He was such a riot during the musical's entire run that other bright opportunities in show biz followed. He spread his hilarious wings to television, appearing in various situation comedies.

Eventually, he also conquered the big screen—appearing in a number of comedy pictures and even topbilling "Okling Tokling," which was bankrolled by an independent producer.

Rocker at heart

Jograd, who is a rocker at heart, also performed with different bands as front-liner. It didn't take long for him to form his own band, The Thinkers, which he still jams with. He was also in demand as a performer abroad, either with major artists like Kuh Ledesma or on his own, in various parts of Canada and the US.

But what he considers as his greatest achievement was his being made a co-host of no less than Nora Aunor in the longest running variety show on TV, "Superstar," for four years. "*Nakakatawa dahil sa* 'Superstar' *talaga ako sumikat at doon din ako nagsimulang malaos. Noong medyo bumaba na ang* rating nito, *tinanggal ako. Alangan namang si Ate* Guy *ang tanggalin, di nawala na talaga ang show!*" he laughs.

He also became a regular on the popular sitcom, "Ober da Bakod." Unfortunately, it also stopped airing due to poor ratings. "*Nadismaya talaga ako sa* show biz career *ko*. Imagine, *ang* 'Superstar' *ilang taon na? Tapos nung napasali ako, nawala sa ere! Sumunod ang* 'Ober da Bakod,' *at bumagsak din*," he sighs.

Jograd took these career setbacks as a sign to do something else. Luckily for him, on one of his stints abroad, he met then secretary of labor Nieves Confesor, who tapped him to work as a POEA testing officer for talents who wanted to work overseas.

His stint as POEA testing officer led him to the more lucrative business of talent management. In 1998, he put up his own talent promotion outfit.

150 talents

To date, Jograd has provided jobs for more than 150 talents, all of them singers who perform primarily in Japan. His keen eye for spotting highly-qualified talents has helped him a lot. Lately, however, the talent promotion industry has been in a slump.

To give his talents (now numbering 50) something to do while waiting for the approval of their travel papers, Jograd has put up JOG 999, a music lounge *cum* piano bar at 1501 Princeton st, corner Shaw blvd. in Mandaluyong City.

The establishment serves as a training ground for his new talents. It is open daily except Sunday from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. "So far, *maganda naman ang takbo, dinadayo na kami ng mga* customer. I make it a point to be there every night *para makita ko ang mga* talents *ko* as they perform. This way, I can tell them *kung saang* area *pa sila puwede mag*-improve.

"*Ang sistema ko kasi dito, yung mga baguhan, sa* videoke *ko pinapakanta. Yung mga magagaling na, sinasabak ko sa pagkanta* with our pianist," he narrates.

Jograd reveals that customers can also jam with Bong Lim, one of his regular singer-pianists. Those who want to display their skill at playing the piano are also welcome.

"*Iba na kasi ang* live entertainment *ngayon, di na yung tipong nakikinig ka lang. Kung gusto nilang ipakita ang galing nila sa pagkanta at pagtugtog, puwede dito. Basta ba mag*-order *at magbayad lang sila*," he quips.

Car plate

A question often asked of Jograd concerns the name of his establishment, JOG 999. "*Wala, tinamad lang akong mag-isip ng pangalan*," he replies. "Actually, *yan ang* car plate *ko. At plano ko na yung* backdrop *ng* stage *ay pupunuin ko ng* replica *ng mga* car plates *ng mga* customer *ko, para feeling* important *sila*."

Is he planning to reactivate his show biz career? "*Hindi na siguro,* happy *na ako sa aking ginagawa ngayon*.

"Actually, I am not totally turning my back on show biz. *Sa mga natitira ko pang mga* fans, they can still catch me singing with my band every Sunday at Cowboy Grill in Mabini starting at 12:30 a.m. " he says.

Jograd admits that he has become practical. He has come to realize that no matter how popular a celebrity is, the eventual decline of his career is inevitable.

To his fellow performers, he has this to say: "*Huwag magpabaya. Hindi habang buhay na kumikita tayo ng malaki* as a performer. There are very few Dolphys and Fernando Poes *na kumikita pa rin* even in their mature years. *Dapat talaga paghandaan ang ating* future, just in case *wala na tayo sa* limelight."

JOGRAD (left), with German Moreno and Nora Aunor on the long-running TV show, "Superstar."

Peter O'Toole to receive honorary Oscar

LOS ANGELES—Veteran Irish-born actor Peter O'Toole, who has been nominated for seven Academy Awards but who never won, will receive an honorary Oscar this year.

Golden statuette

O'Toole, 70, known for his intense on-screen presence and piercing blue eyes, will finally receive his golden statuette on March 23, when the 75th anniversary Academy Awards are bestowed in Hollywood.

The actor is being recognized for creating some of cinema's most famous roles, including that of "Lawrence of Arabia," Oscars officials said.

O'TOOLE. Intense on-screen presence.

The citation that accompanies the golden man will read: "Peter O'Toole—whose remarkable talents have provided cinema history with some of its most memorable characters." While he is world-famous for such roles as British war hero "T.E. Lawrence" in the 1962 epic "Lawrence of Arabia," his first major film, and Henry II in 1968's "The Lion in Winter," O'Toole has never taken a statuette home.

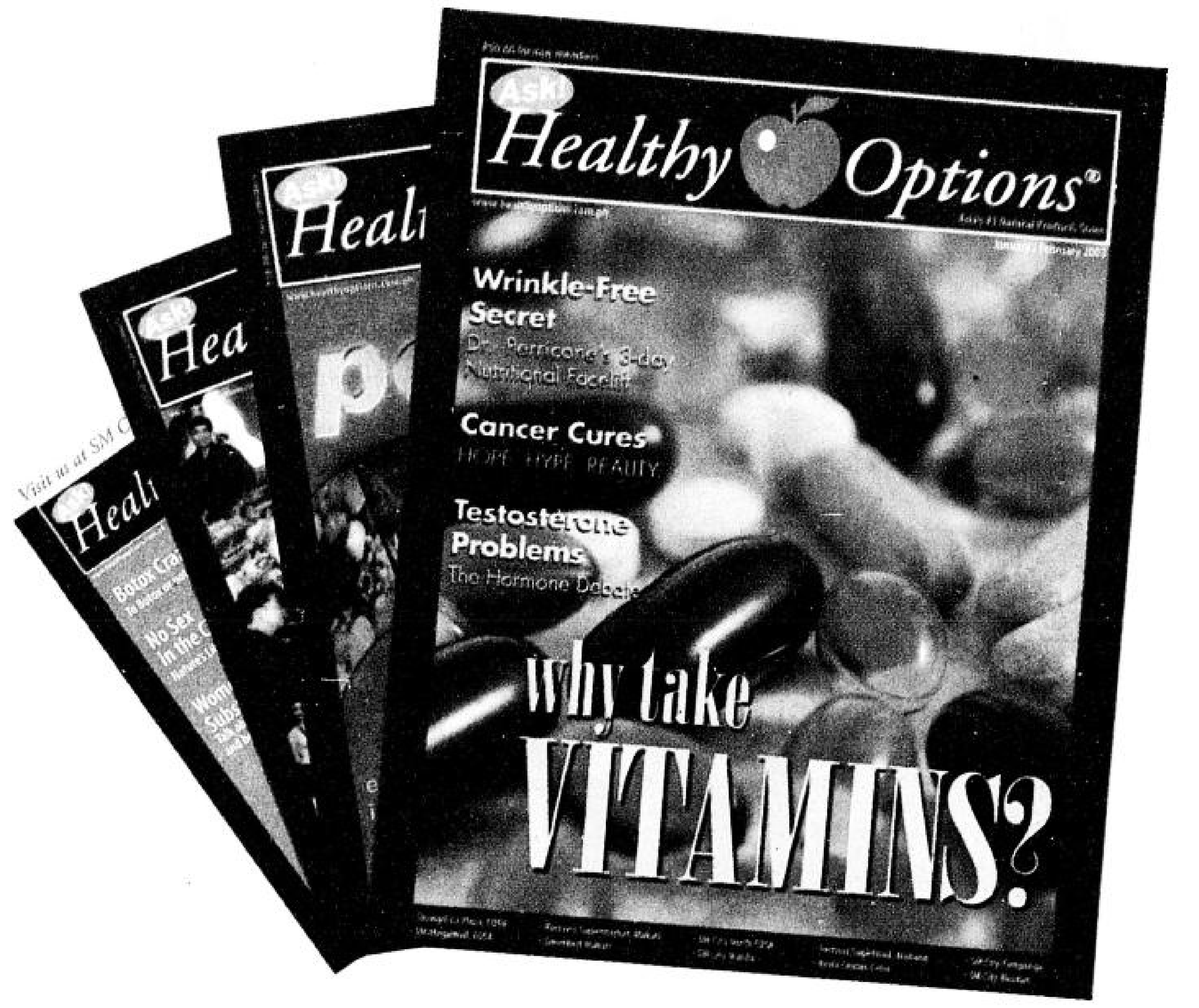
Four decades

"O'Toole's performances have ignited the screen for more than four decades," said Frank Pierson, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which runs cinema's top awards.

"He's seven times been nominated as best actor. The Board of Governors felt it was time for him to hold his own Oscar in his hands," Pierson added.

AFP

Nobody does it better.



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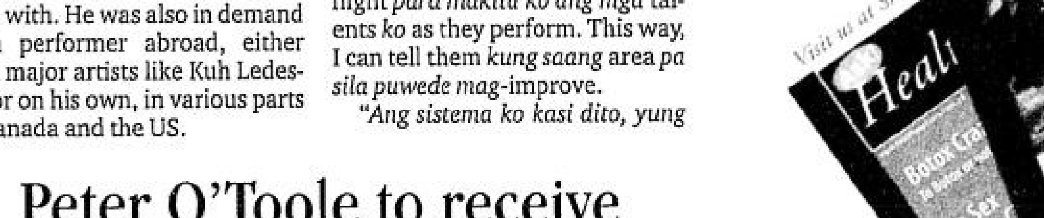
- SM City Pampanga
- SM City Bicutan

Enchanted Kingdom



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On February 1 & 2, all Ride-All ticket holders will get special Enchanted Kingdom Ang Pao envelopes.* And be sure to check out and marvel at the dazzling display of dexterity of our performers:

Dragon and Lion Dance by the Golden Red Lion & Dragon Dance Troupe
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January 30 & 31 (2 shows/day) and February 1 & 2 (3 shows/day)

Fireworks Display (9:00PM)

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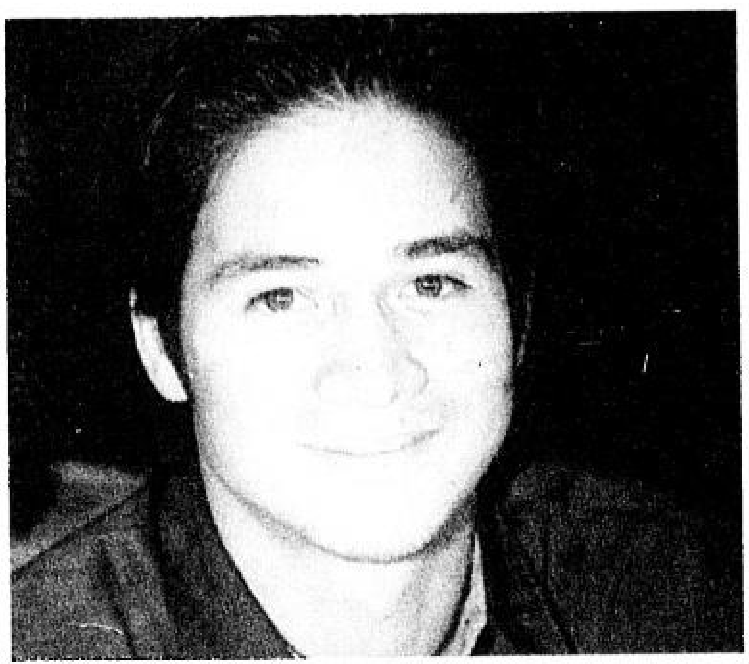
Makati Sales Office: G/F Tropical Palms Condominium, De la Rosa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City • Park Address: Enchanted Kingdom, San Lorenzo South, Sta. Rosa, Laguna • Tel. No.: 830-2111 to 16, 843-6073 to 78 • Tickets also available at all Ticketworld outlets: National Bookstore branches • Tower Records (Makati, Alabang) • Robinson's Department Stores (Galleria, Manila)

Successful show biz career is Piolo Pascual's destiny


PASCUAL. No time for negativity.

By Jocelyn Valle

TOM Cruise, in a magazine article, revealed that while doing "Minority Report," he got to discuss with the futuristic film's director, Steven Spielberg, the basis for success: Is it predestination or free will?

Embodiment

Piolo Pascual, who's the embodiment of success in local show business today, believes that the answer is predestination. A quick background check on his show biz history supports his position:

In his early teen years, he became a part of "That's Entertainment" but his career failed to take off. After high school, he joined UST's theater group, Teatro Tomasino, and soon found himself in a children's show on Channel 2, "Atbp." Then he made it to the giant network's Star Circle, Batch 3.

But before he could catch up with his more popular contemporaries, Piolo chose to live with his mom in the States, where he did a string of odd jobs instead of pursuing a college degree.

Decision

Then he made the decision that changed his life forever. He went back home and picked up from where he had left off. He finally got his break in the weekly miniseries, "Sa Sandaling Kailangan Mo Ako," and in "Lagarista."

Piolo's short stint in the soap "Esperanza" led to his pairing with the popular Judy Ann Santos. A couple of hits and some strategic career-management planning later, Piolo is the hot young actor we know now.

"We make our own destiny," he nods, shifting his attention away from his laptop, which he brings to his tapings, to reply to our query. "But everything comes from God."

The 26-year-old actor-singer shares that he's humbled by his achievements. Each time that he accomplishes something—a box-office hit, top-rating TV show, concert, recording or an acting award—Piolo feels that there's a higher being responsible for all the good things that are happening in his life.

This realization has redefined his spirituality. Piolo now tries his best to faithfully attend his Church's Sunday service, and also to read the Bible and pray more.

Unfair

"He's been so good to me, so it would be unfair *na suklian ko ng masama ang mga* blessings *Niya*," he avers. "Honestly, I don't feel I deserve all these blessings. But I savor each one of them and I treat it as a gift. Now I want to be a living example of God's goodness."

There may be people who doubt his sincerity, but Piolo isn't bothered. "As long as you know what's in your heart, you don't have to be affected by other people's opinion of you. Besides, I don't have time for that," he smiles.

Indeed, because Piolo is one of the busiest stars in Tinseltown. Channel 2's "Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka" will conclude this month but the soap's main stars, Piolo and Judy Ann, will be seen on the big screen in Star Cinema's Mothers' Day offering, tentatively titled "Picture Mom."

He happily reports that his eponymous debut album is turning gold . But he hastens to add that a follow-up is not in the works yet. In fact, it may take a while before he goes back to the recording studios.

Cautious

Piolo, you see, is a cautious person. If he feels he can't handle a responsibility, he won't hesitate to say no. For instance, he's been offered to do either a solo or a back-to-back concert this Valentine's Day, but he opted for a smaller participation as a guest artist.

This attitude almost cost him his Jules role in "Dekada '70." Piolo declined the offer by Star Cinema because he felt he couldn't do it. Fortunately, he set aside his fears and let his thespic instincts rule.

Winning the Best Supporting Actor award forces him to always be at his thespic best. "*Nakakatakot kasi* to prove that I deserve it," he acknowledges. "But I love my craft, and that will be my motivation for the new assignments I take on."

Piolo may be destined to be a successful young star, but he certainly worked hard for the fulfillment of his dream.

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YEAR OF THE GOAT

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SM Supercenter Sucat	January [illegible]	2:00 p.m.
SM City Bacoor	January 31	11:00 a.m.
SM Centerpoint	January 31	11:00 a.m.
SM Pampanga	January 31	11:00 a.m.
SM Southmall	February 1	11:00 a.m.
SM City Fairview	February 1	11:00 a.m.
SM City Manila	February 1	11:00 a.m.
SM City Bicutan	February 1	11:00 a.m.
SM Megamall	February 1	11:00 a.m.

Chinese Martial Arts Show

Wushu experts exhibit the art and craft of the original traditional Chinese skill performed in enchanting Chinese symphony.

SM Southmall	January 18	3:00 p.m.
SM City Fairview	January 19	3:00 p.m.
SM City Manila	January 24	4:00 p.m.
SM Megamall	January 25	3:00 p.m.
SM City Bicutan	January 25	4:00 p.m.
SM Centerpoint	January 26	4:00 p.m.
SM City North Edsa	January 26	5:00 p.m.
SM Supercenter Sucat	January 31	4:00 p.m.
SM City Bacoor	February 1	4:00 p.m.

Chinese Cooking Demo

Feast on as sumptuous Chinese patriarchal cuisines are prepared before you by the best Chinese chefs.

SM Megamall	January 17	2:00 p.m.
SM City North Edsa	January 18	2:00 p.m.
SM City Fairview	January 31	2:00 p.m.
SM City Bicutan	February 1	2:00 p.m.

Girls in Cheong Sam

Be amazed at what the Year of the Goat will bring to you as girls in traditional Chinese outfits hand out astrology cards.

All Malls	February 1	1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

* Except SM City Iloilo, SM City Cebu, SM City Davao and SM City Cagayan de Oro.

Lucky shoppers will receive Ang Pao with goodies inside for luck and good fortune!
(from Jan. 20 to Feb. 01, 2003)

CITY NORTH EDSA • CENTERPOINT • CITY ILOILO • SOUTHMALL • CITY FAIRVIEW • CITY BACOOR • CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
CITY DAVAO • SUPERCENTER SUCAT • CITY MANILA • CITY PAMPANGA • CITY BICUTAN • MEGAMALL • CITY CEBU

MyCinema raises moviegoing to higher notch

By Ronald G. Mangubat

IN the days when cinemas were not yet in malls, people who watched movies sometimes had to cope with all sorts of hassles in order to be entertained.

Cineplexes

Today's "mallified" culture has changed all that. State-of-the-art mall cineplexes are just a few steps away from shops, boutiques and cafes. There are also guaranteed seats, phoned-in ticket reservations, spotless restrooms—etc.! The people at Ayala Cinemas should be credited for some of these innovations.

Recently, Ayala Cinemas came up with yet another unique concept that elevates moviegoing to a higher notch. Called MyCinema, this new approach is described as a new level of urban retail entertainment. Located at Greenbelt 3 in Makati, it is the country's one and only private cinema where anyone can watch a movie at his own convenience and style.

Private place

"This is another entertainment option," explains Winnie Nazareth, assistant vice president, marketing and entertainment divisions, at Ayala Land Inc. "It's a private place where you can enjoy and watch the latest movies, have parties with your family, friends, clients, etc."

Rafael "Raffy" Prats Jr., vice president of Ayala Cinemas, says MyCinema has THX quality, 50 luxurious seats, German-made projectors, Dolby EX sound format, and a cocktail area where you can have drinks and food catered by Greenbelt merchants.

"You rent the place for four hours and we have peak, regular and off-peak rates at reasonable prices. The perks include printed invitations for your guests, free popcorn and soft drinks, free parking and passes to our Timezone game area," he enthuses.

Own film

"As far as movies are concerned, you can have your own private screenings of films that are on commercial run, or you can bring your own film, VCD or DVD of any movie, as long as it's approved by the MTRCB, not pirated and has a VRB hologram," adds Lelet Volfango, marketing manager of Ayala Cinemas. "You can also bring your wedding or birthday videos, but we have to approve the materials first."

People have thought of their own innovative ways to maximize this cozy and luxurious venue. Nazareth cites the case of a man who rented the theater for a private screening of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" to propose marriage to his girlfriend. "Die Another Day," the most recent James Bond movie, had eight private screenings at the new venue.

What have been the effects of innovations like MyCinema on the public's moviegoing habits? For Nazareth, aside from the creation of a new market, the biggest effect is the reemergence of people who, for a long time, were contented with being lethargic couch potatoes and continuously watched DVDs and VCDs in the confines of their homes.

Ciao! Ciao!
Siopao! Palitaw!

E-mail: pr_junior_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Junior INQUIRER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2003 ✦ 12 PAGES ✦ VOLUME 7, NUMBER 18

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WHAT'S INSIDE:

Frog in the Sky! Page 2
Your Poetry Page 6
Meet Abish's Characters! Page 9
Shirley's Pets Page 11

From Italy with Love

Fourteen Filipino-Italian kids eat ube ice cream, climb in nipa huts and stare at a mountain of garbage on a trip they will never forget.

By Eline Santos

IN Corregidor...the kids take a ride back in time.

CFMW-ITALYA

WHAT if, like Superman, you grew up on earth but were really from another planet? How would you know what being a Kryptonian is all about?

Fourteen kids who spent most of their lives in Italy came home for a month to further explore and experience their Pinoy side: the good, the bad and the different.

The trip was sponsored by the Commission of Filipino Migrant Workers-Italya. It is the hands-on equivalent of their summer school lessons on Filipino culture at the CFMW's Munting Paaralan.

The first thing 12-year-old Luigi Abraham noticed when he arrived was the weather. "It's hot!"

"I'd like to put air-conditioning in the jeepneys," says 11-year-old Giancarlo Alibayan.

Sweaty Days

The relative warmth is probably why more than half said they most enjoyed their visit to Villa Escudero, one of the many places they went to during their exposure trip.

> *"Despite traffic, being in your own country is really an enjoyable experience."*

"It's like a big resort," describes 12-year-old Ridge Santos. "With a swimming pool," smiles Federico Aranzazo, also 12.

"I liked Villa Escudero because of the *bahay kubo*," says Giancarlo, one of the more fluent Filipino-speakers in the group. He says he would like to bring a house back with him. "In Italy, the houses are apartment buildings where a lot of people live." That means less privacy and more rules on being quiet.

"There's no visiting of neighbors there," remarks 13-year-old Rosette Marie Hernandez.

"It's easier to get close to people here," adds 15-year-old Michelyn Rose Gascon.

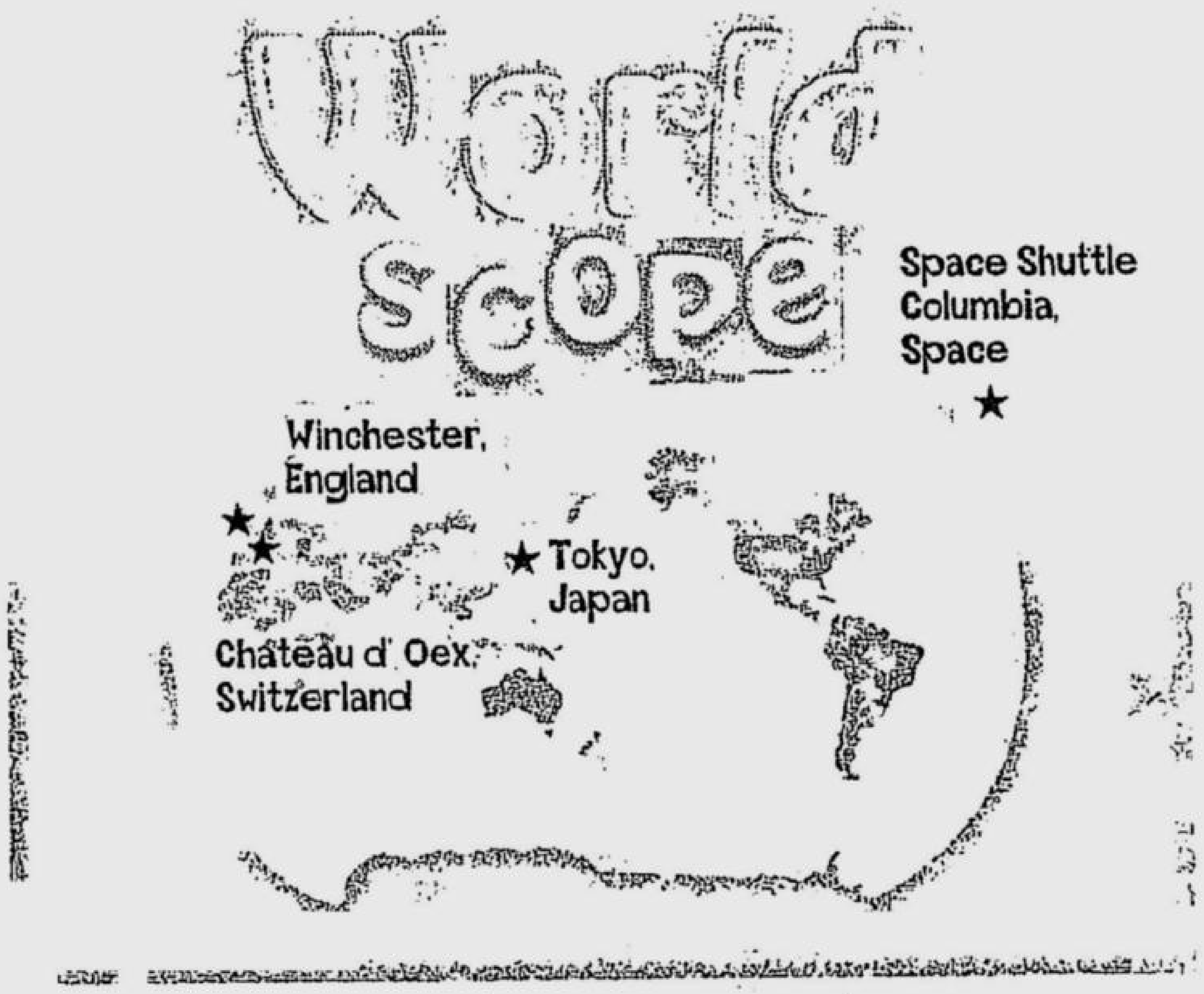
This, despite the language barrier. Not one of the young *balikbayans* spoke English. Twelve-year-old Roderick Tomas for instance could only speak in Italian and Ilocano.

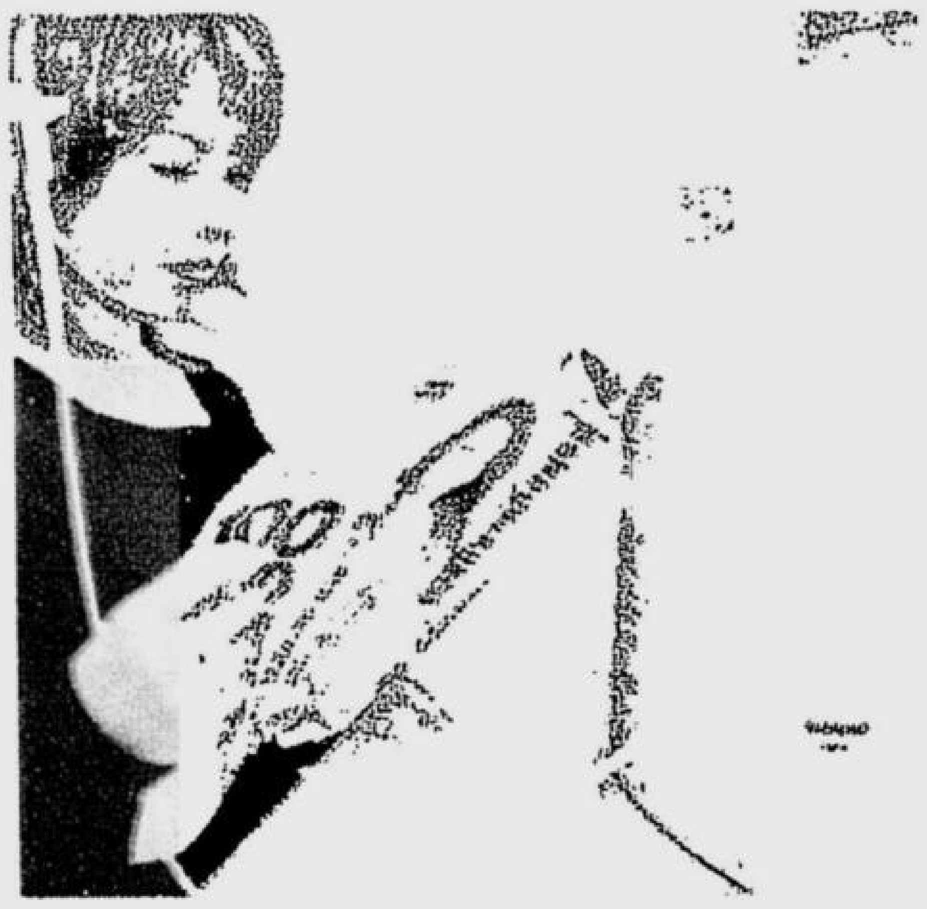
"Kamag-anak" x 10!

"It was difficult to remember all my relatives' names because there were so many!" 12-year-old Gian Paolo Bundallan remembers of his first visit.

Aside from getting together with kin, the group visited historical places such as Fort Santiago, the National Museum, and Corregidor. Gian Paolo and

From Italy/ p. 4



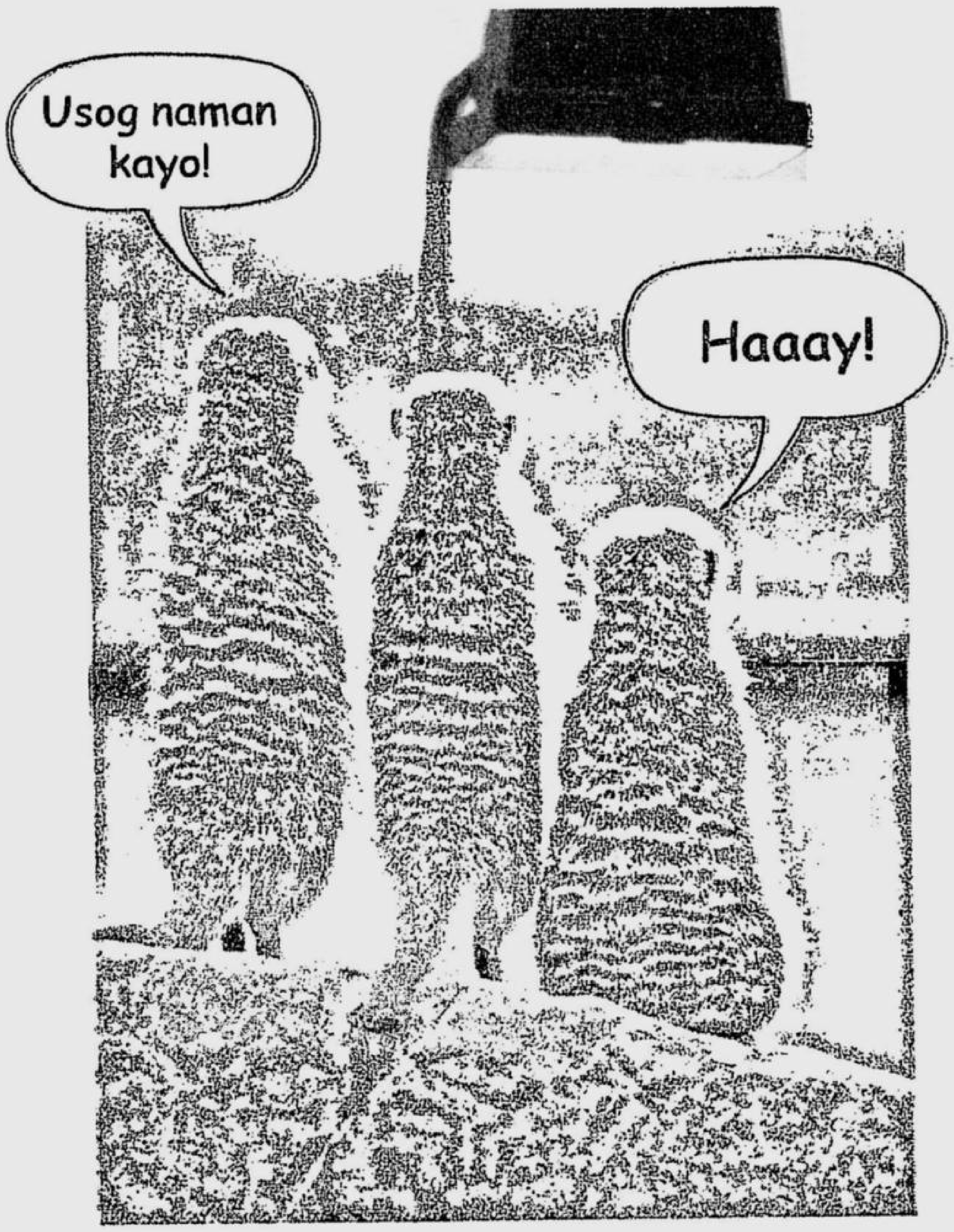


Portable Air Station

A MODEL displays Panasonic's new device, the Oxygen Concentrator. The machine provides users with air that has a high oxygen concentration of 30 percent. This is said to help improve one's mental concentration, eliminate drowsiness and help one recover from fatigue. It will be sold in the Japanese market at 48,000 yen or around P21,500 starting March 3. *AP*

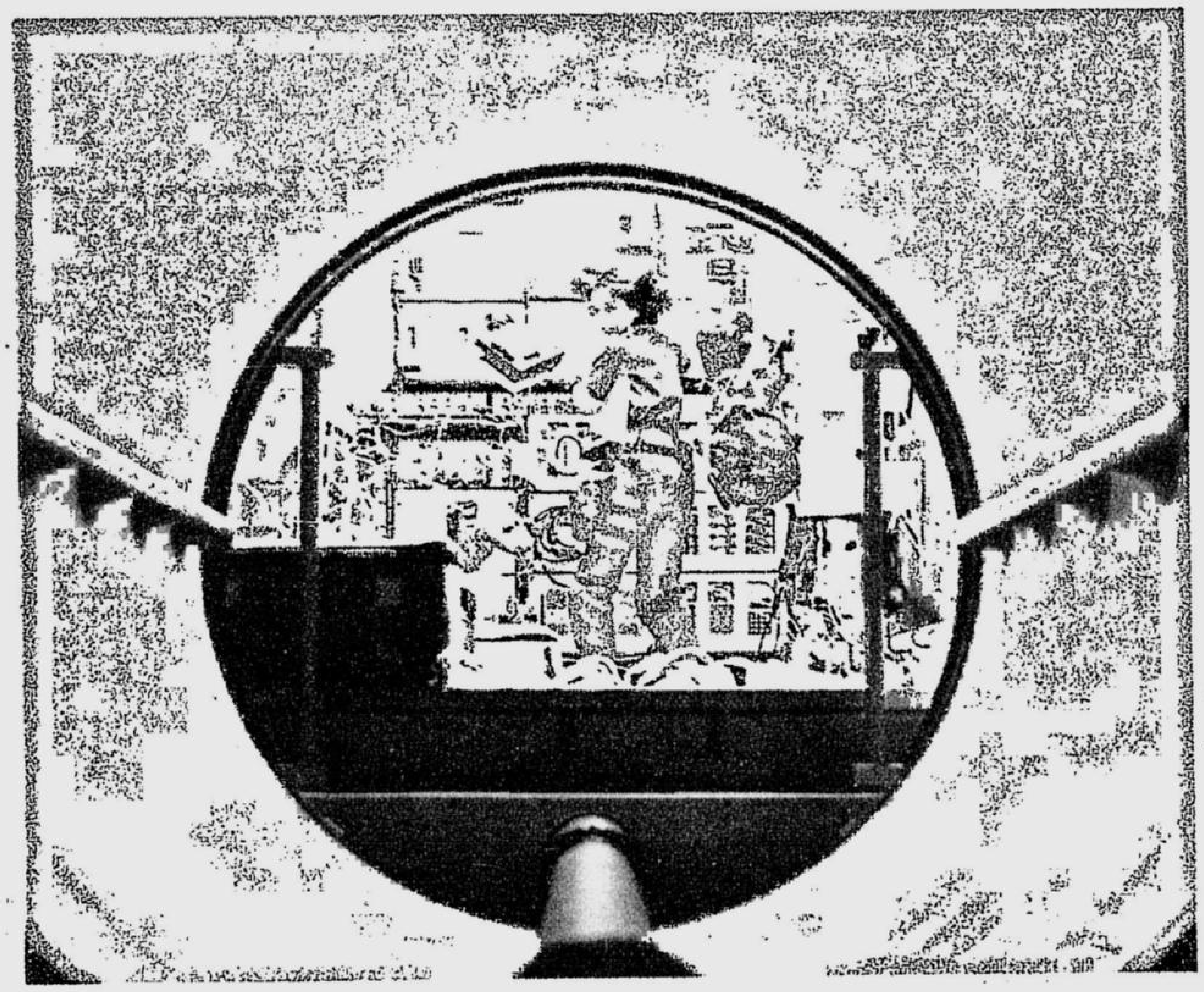
Strange Things in the Sky

FLOATING in the sky in the Swiss Alps are hot-air balloons shaped like a giant frog and a white bear. The 25th International Hot-Air Balloon festival in Chateau d'Oex, Switzerland was concluded mid-January with more than 100 balloons from 19 countries participating in the event. *AFP*



Meerkat Cuddles

A FAMILY of meerkats huddles for warmth around a heat lamp at Marwell Zoological Park near Winchester. In their natural southern African habitat, large groups of the desert dwellers like to bask in the sun, but on the chilly south coast of England they have to make do with a false sun provided by their keepers. *AFP*



All in a Day's Work

INDIAN-BORN US astronaut Kalpana Chawla works in the SPACEHAB Research Double Module aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia. The Columbia and her seven-person crew are on a 16-day science mission where they will conduct over 80 outer space experiments. *AFP*

By Christine A. Paita

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax number is 897-4794 and our e-mail address is pr_junior_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Contests

DEAR ANNE FRANK. Share your thoughts on peace and the youth's role in achieving it by joining the **Anne Frank Essay-writing Contest**. The contest is open to high school and university students who must select only one essay topic. Entries must be written in English and must not exceed 900 words. Send them by e-mail to annefrankessay@dutchembassy.ph. or to the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Anne Frank Essay Contest, 9th Flr., King's Court Bldg. 1, 2129 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. The **deadline for entries** is on Feb. 15. For the essay questions and for more details on the contest, log on to www.dutchembassy.ph. Visit the **Anne Frank exhibit**, ongoing until Feb. 24, at the San Agustin Museum, Intramuros, Manila. The exhibit will also run at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, 4th Flr., Ortigas, Mandaluyong City from Feb. 27 until March 31. For more info, call the Royal Netherlands Embassy at 812-5981 local 226 or visit its website.

ANNE Frank

WWW.DUTCHEMBASSY.PH

SCIENCE AND VISUAL ARTS. The Philippine Foundation for Science and Technology invites students in Grades 5-7, ages 10 to 13, to join the **17th Sci-Artists' Competition**. Artworks should interpret the theme "Batang Agham sa Bagong Milenyo" focusing on "Science as A Way of Life: Energy and Environment." Entries should be mounted on an 18 x 20 format. Use of indigenous materials is highly encouraged. Application forms are available at the Dept. of Education and Dept. of Science and Technology regional/provincial centers and offices. Deadline for submission of entries is on Feb. 5. For inquiries, contact the National Secretariat at (02) 536-3092 or 525-8418 and look for Sionie or Karen, or e-mail sci-art@philonline.com.

Workshops

YOUNG MINDS ART ACTIVITY. Still have the Christmas blues? Nothing to do on weekends? Come to **Young Minds**, 2nd Flr., Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City for some fun art activities on Sundays, Feb. 2 and March 9 from 1-4 p.m. Teachers Rita Badilla and Endo Pascasio of **Kids at Art** will teach kids some of the techniques illustrators use to illustrate their books and how to make masks and puppets. Workshops are free.

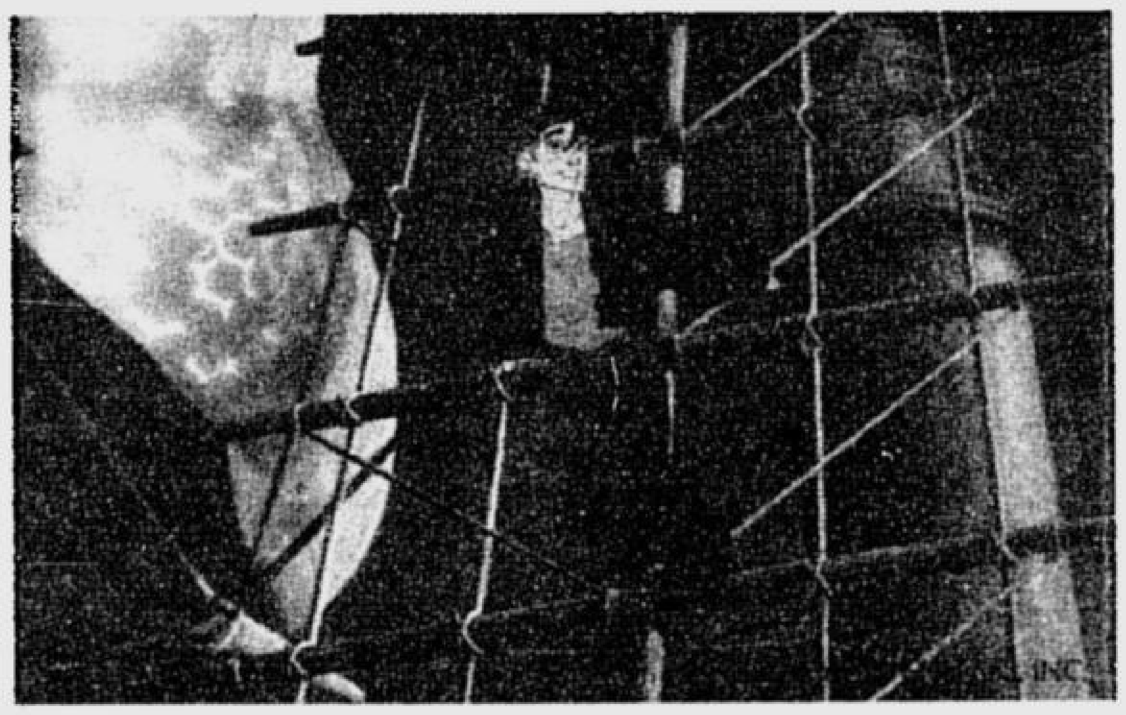
LI'L ONES ARE INVITED! Li'l Hands kiddy arts club invites all members to its 5th **anniversary party** on Feb. 8 at Don Bosco Technical Institute, Makati City, from 1 to 5 p.m. There will be a mascot parade and a workshop for kids ages 4-15. Membership application is also accepted on site. For inquiries, contact Lyn or Beng at 842-1515 or 568-5868, fax number 842-1518, or e-mail club@lilhands.com.

Exhibit

OF RAINFORESTS AND YOUR BODY. Visit Museo Pambata's exhibit on endangered rainforests, ongoing until Feb. 9, in Robinsons Place, Iloilo City. The exhibit features fun and challenging hands-on activities and enny Reyes-Velasco's story, **"Are You the Forest King?."** Also, check out the hands-on exhibit at the newly-renovated Katawan Ko theme room in Museo Pambata and discover what goes on inside your body. Museo Pambata is at Roxas Blvd. corner South Drive, Manila. For inquiries, call 523-1797 to 98, send a fax message to 522-1246, or e-mail pr-prog@museo pambata.org.

Movie

TREASURE PLANET. Walt Disney treats kids to its latest animation feature film, **"Treasure Planet."** This adventure-filled movie is based on Robert Louis Stevenson's book, "Treasure Island" and follows the story of 15-year-old Jim Hawkins who joins the crew of an intergalactic expedition as cabin boy aboard a glittering space galleon. He journeys through space and discovers a "treasure" amidst battling supernovas, black holes and ferocious space storms. "Treasure Planet" opens in theaters on Feb. 26.



JIM Hawkins joins an intergalactic expedition in Walt Disney's "Treasure Planet."

Cable Picks

KUNG HEI FAT CHOI! In time for the **Chinese New Year**, tune in to **National Geographic Channel** for a taste of the different Asian cuisines in **"Asia Delicacies"** today, Feb. 1, Chinese New Year's Day, from 8-9 p.m. Get hooked on "Dim Sum Odyssey," where you get to tour Hong Kong, the home of dim sum, and "sample" over 600 different varieties of this delicacy. Yum-yum! Then, relish **"A Peking Duck's Tale"** and visit duck farms around Beijing and famous restaurants in China for a taste of this im-

Out/ p. 12

From Italy with Love

(from page 1)

Michelyn say they liked the Corregidor visit best.

"We saw the Malinta tunnel where the Americans hid from the Japanese," Gian Paolo relates.

"Now I understand why McArthur came to the Philippines," says Michelyn.

Her sister Melodee on the other hand enjoyed the visit to Fort Santiago, "where we traced Jose Rizal's footsteps."

It was the Payatas visit, however, that left the strongest impression.

"Why are their houses like that?" asks 11-year-old Isabelle Mendoza. "Can't they be given decent houses with a roof and concrete walls? Is there some way to uplift or change their situation?"

Sad Thoughts

Twelve-year-old Melodee Gascon shares, "I saw a baby who was very dirty with scabs all over his skin. From how he looked, it seemed to me that the child could get sick and was, in fact, dying. I wanted to help but I didn't know how."

"They sleep in garbage, they don't have houses. Everyone has abandoned them," Melodee says with her eyes full of questions.

Her identical twin Melanie thinks "their houses should be made sturdy. What if a typhoon came? They would be the first affected."

"I saw children enjoying themselves in a pool of water that was very dirty," says 12-year-old Romulo Emmanuel "Re" Salvador. "But they were still enjoying themselves. Here, kids are happy to receive P50. In Italy, one euro gets complaints."

"In the Philippines, people walk around in slippers. I can't do that in Italy. Everyone wears shoes," remarks Alessandro Sabong, 12.

"In Italy..."

One thing Ale would change is the traffic. "Transportation is so disorganized," he observes. "In Italy there is government transportation that comes at regular times. Here it's mostly private transportation."

CFMW-ITALYA

RHODERICK is reunited with his aunt as his grandmother looks on.

"If you ride a tricycle in Italy, people will think you look stupid but here it's a means of livelihood," Luigi points out.

Luigi also speaks up on something the group noticed. "I don't understand ...those who eat dogs." Everyone nods, as a chorus of "yuck"s go around the room. "Here, dogs are made into guards, they have a specific role. There, dogs are treated like friends. They are loved and not eaten."

Politics doesn't escape their attention, either.

"Politicians are so disordered. They're always fighting," they say.

Rosette wants something done about the Abu Sayyaf, "because the children and many families are the ones who suffer. They're the ones affected."

Ice Cream & Clothes

Despite reality bites, "being in your own country is really enjoyable. You don't notice the time fly by so fast," Michelyn assures.

"It's the hospitality," says Ridge.

For some, it's the shopping. Luigi would lug SM and Robinsons over to Italy if he could, "because there are so many clothes there."

The girls may have picked up clothes with brand names not found in Italy too, but believe it or not, they also want school uniforms they've seen in the Philippines. "They look so cute," says Michelyn. Melodee agrees, "They're very nice to look at."

Re wants his own *sungka* set and will miss ube ice cream. Michelyn will miss *bangus*, *cornik*, peanuts, *singkamas*, and *santol*.

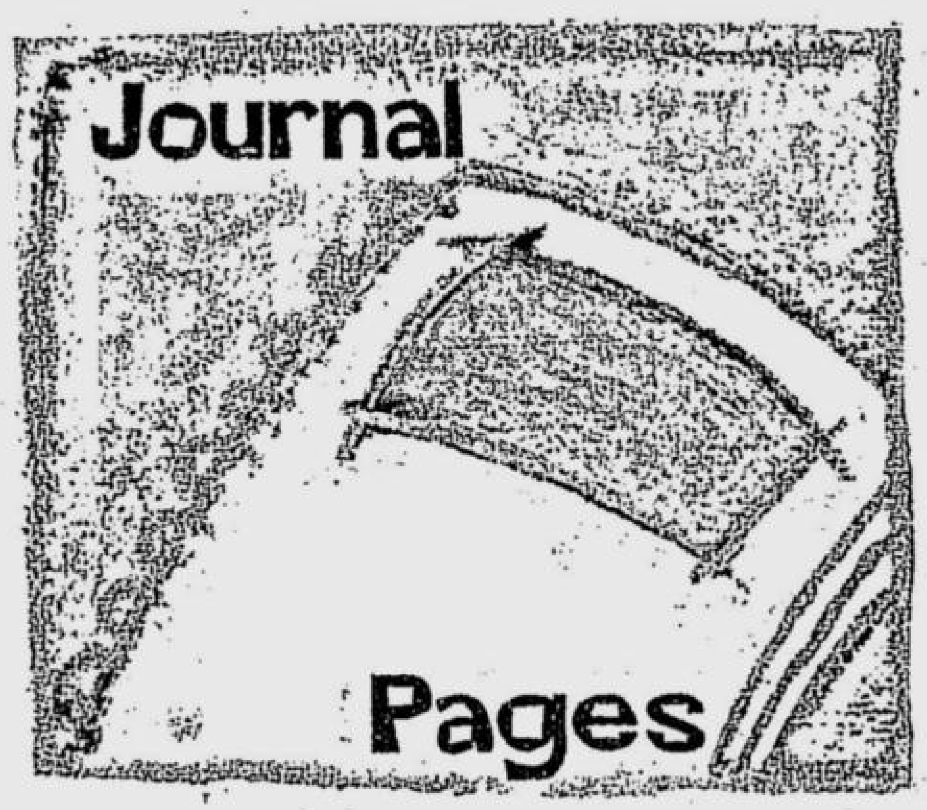
"The vinegar here is different," says Rosette. "It's good." She also likes *bibingka*.

Giancarlo enjoys fast food like McDo and Jollibee. "I like the spaghetti and the chicken."

"Come over to Italy," Giancarlo invites kids. "And bring us food that can't be found there," he smiles.

RHODERICK, Giancarlo, one of the Gascon twins, Isabelle, Marvin, Rosette, and Romulo trade the Lamborghini for a kalesa at Villa Escudero. CFMW-ITALYA

UNDER the waterfalls at Villa Escudero CFMW-ITALYA



Our Economy

By John Clemen Alcantara
Grade 7-A, Southridge School
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

OUR economy today is still low. But we Filipinos are trying our best to improve it for future generations.

There are many problems that the Philippines faces. Our peso is so small compared to the US dollar. Oil price increases have raised transportation fares, gas prices and the prices of goods sold in markets.

There also aren't enough jobs for Filipinos. Some Filipinos are forced to work abroad to earn money for families. It must be very hard for them to be away from their families.

We also lack funds. Without funds, we cannot build or repair roads. We can't maintain the ships and jets that protect our boundaries from trespassers and invaders.

We need to pay our taxes to replenish our supplies.

And we need to put away our garbage properly and protect our air, land and waters from pollution. If we disregard this problem, it will affect tourism and the health of our people.

The government is trying its best to improve our economy. Our government did a good job to lessen the terrorism in the country and is doing its best to bring peace to our land.

We can all do these and improve it by practicing unity which is a tool to a better country.

Sound Familiar?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!

Harry Potter Forever

HI! I like Harry Potter. My sisters like them too. My favorite Harry Potter book is the 4th book, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." My favorite teacher in Hogwarts is Professor R.J. Lupin, their Defense against the Dark Arts teacher. I mean, even if he is a werewolf.

I also like Daniel Radcliffe. He's so cute! Here are some sites where fans can attend classes at Hogwarts and come to the Yule Ball: ravenclaw.hyperboards.com. and www.potterfanatic. com. I belong to hp_chamber_of_secrets@yahoogroups.com.

Hey, kids who like Harry Potter, e-mail me! Join our group, too. —**LUANNE Y. GASILLA**, 12, angel_cute_22@yahoo.com.

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More moral lessons, please!

I am one of the so many kids who love to read JI. I want to comment on stories appearing in "For or By Kids." Please include more moral lessons... Please tell all the storywriters that their stories should contain at least a single moral lesson.—**CHRISTOPHER FAVILA**, Philippine Science High School, Quezon City

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Journal Pages

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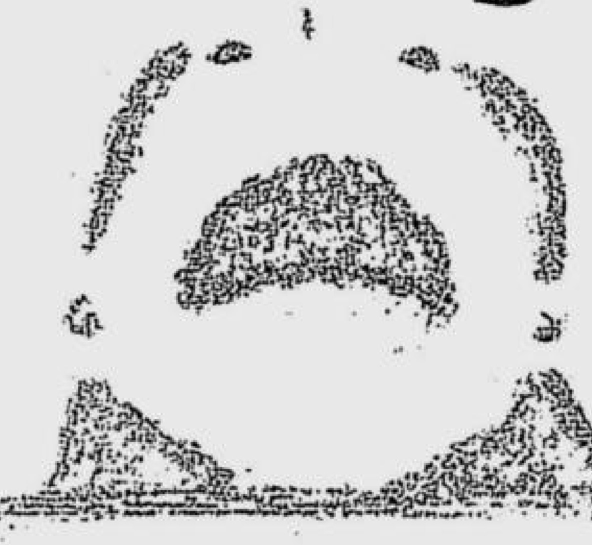
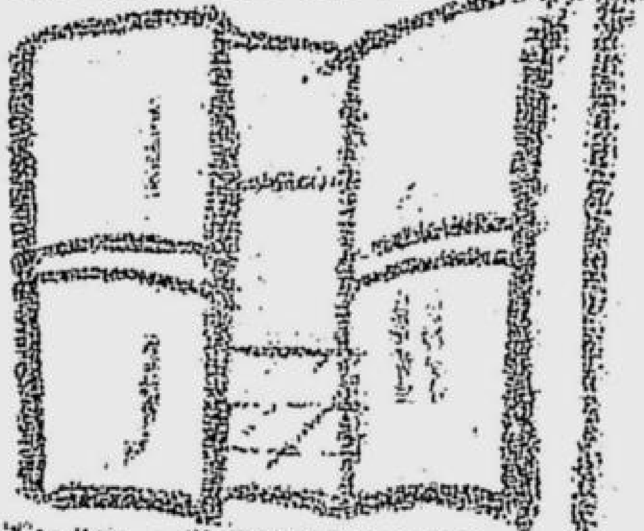


You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



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FOR KIDS BY KIDS

Poetry by Roma Airia P. Garcia
Art by Jose Badelles

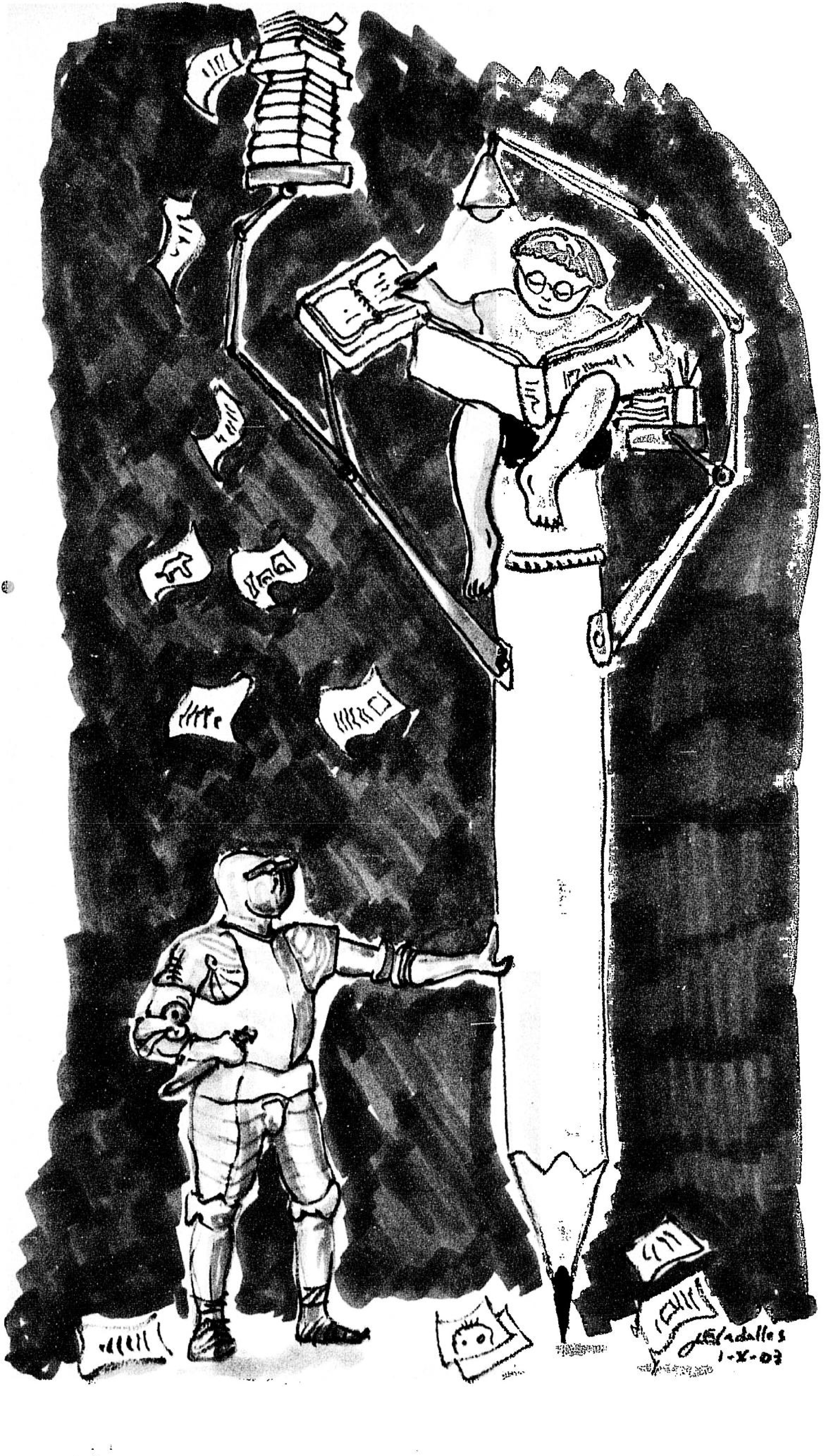
When You Study...

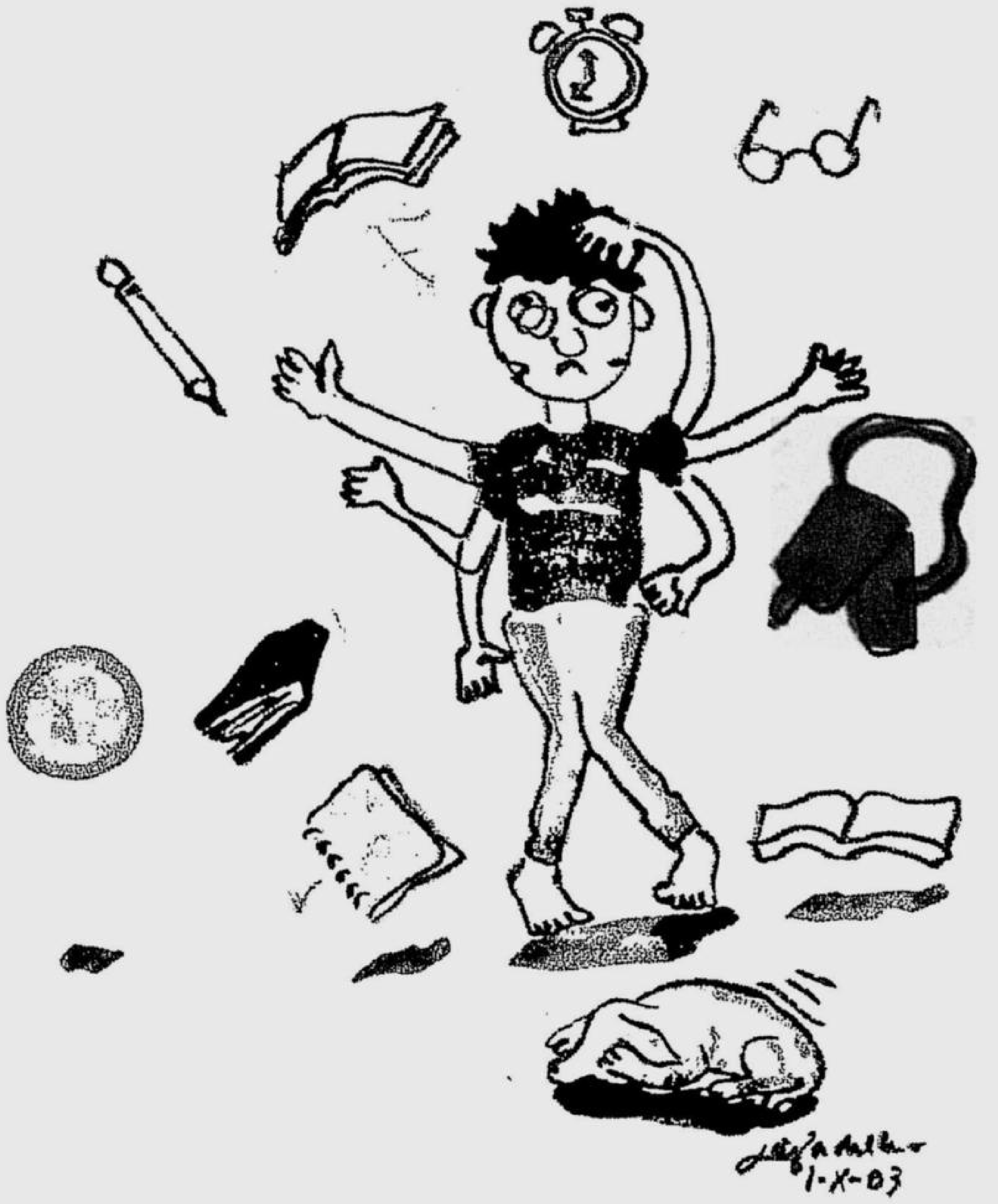
When you study
You will learn more
Pass exams with very high grades,
And answer questions very quick.

When you study
You will know what's right,
You will be ready for a very good fight,
I don't mean the fight of strength,
But the fight of knowledge
Of what you know.

Now do you see the importance of it?
That when you study you will be very quick
Answering questions will not be very hard
For you are ready
And know what's the right answer

You will not guess
For you know it right
So study well and always prepare
You will know it
Cause you answered it well.





1-X-03

Ang Buhay ng Eskuwela

Maaga kang gigising baka ma-late ka
Alas-siete pa lamang dapat nasa school ka na
Ang mga subject mo dapat mong intindihin
Dahil pag hindi mo inintindi
Lagot ka pagdating ng exams.

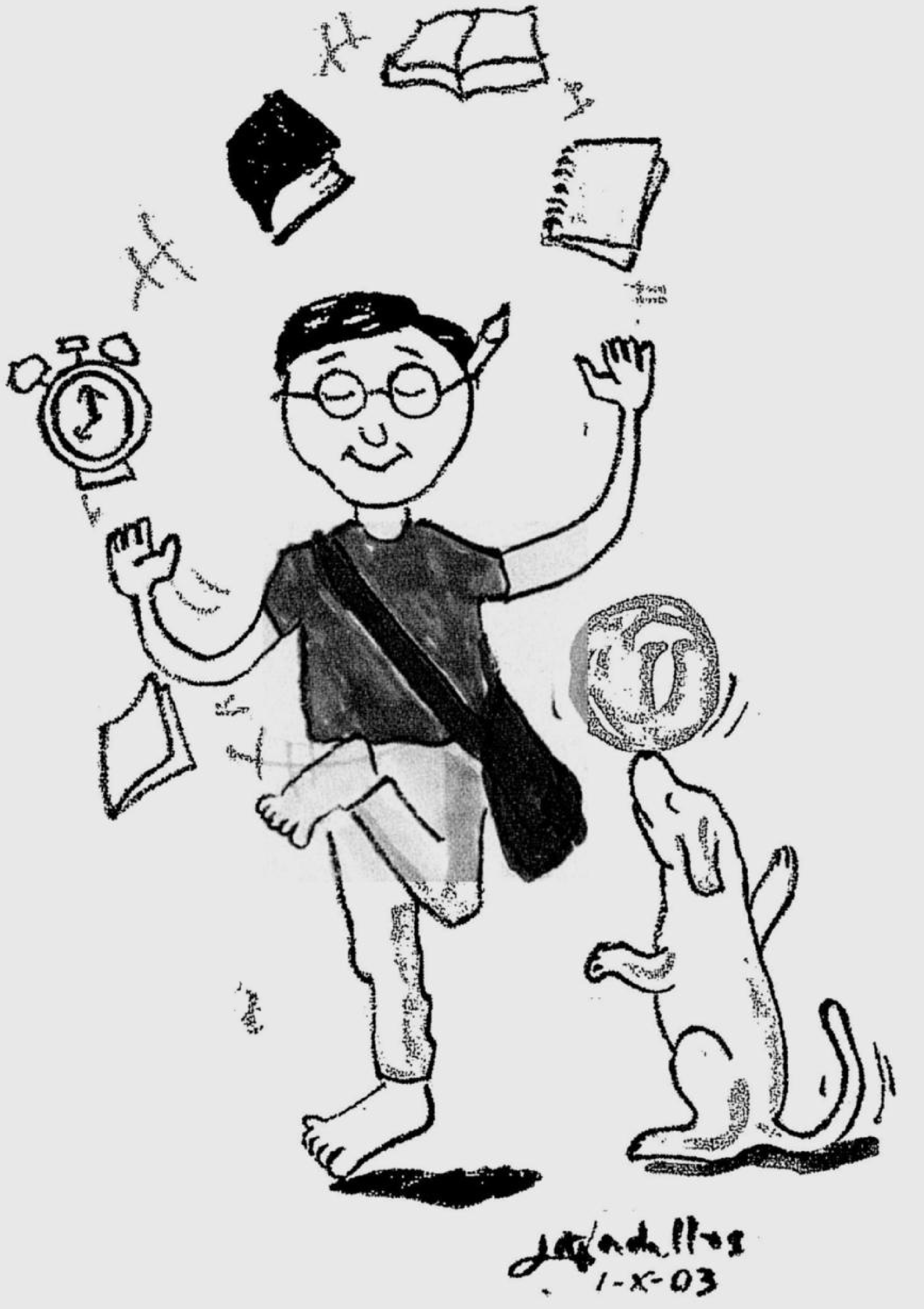
Paano na lang pag puro bagsak ang mga exam mo.
Malalagot ka kay nanay at tatay,
Grounded ka ng isang buwan.

Kay dami-daming assignments
Kailangan mong tapusin
Mag-aaral ka pa dahil may long quiz pa bukas
Hay, ang hirap talaga
kailan kaya ako matatapos dito?

Hindi bale nang mahirapan
Kung ang mga pangarap mo ay maaabot mo
Ang lahat naman ng pinaghirapan mo
Sa iyo din mapupunta hindi ba?
Mas gugustuhin ko na lang na mahirapan sa pag-aaral
Kesa walang matutuhan at mapahiya
Ako rin naman ang magsisisi pag hindi ako nakapag-tapos ng pag-aaral
Paano na lang ako
Pag wala na sina nanay at tatay.

*Si **Roma**, 10, ay nag-aaral sa Spirit Wings Learning Foundation sa Indang, Cavite.*

*Si **Ouie**, 37, ay isang manunulat, ilustrador, educator at psychologist. Siya ay miyembro ng Ilustrador ng Kabataan at ng Society of Chidren's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). Siya ay nagtuturo ng Creativity class sa Ateneo de Manila University sa Quezon City. Marunong na siyang mag-juggle.*



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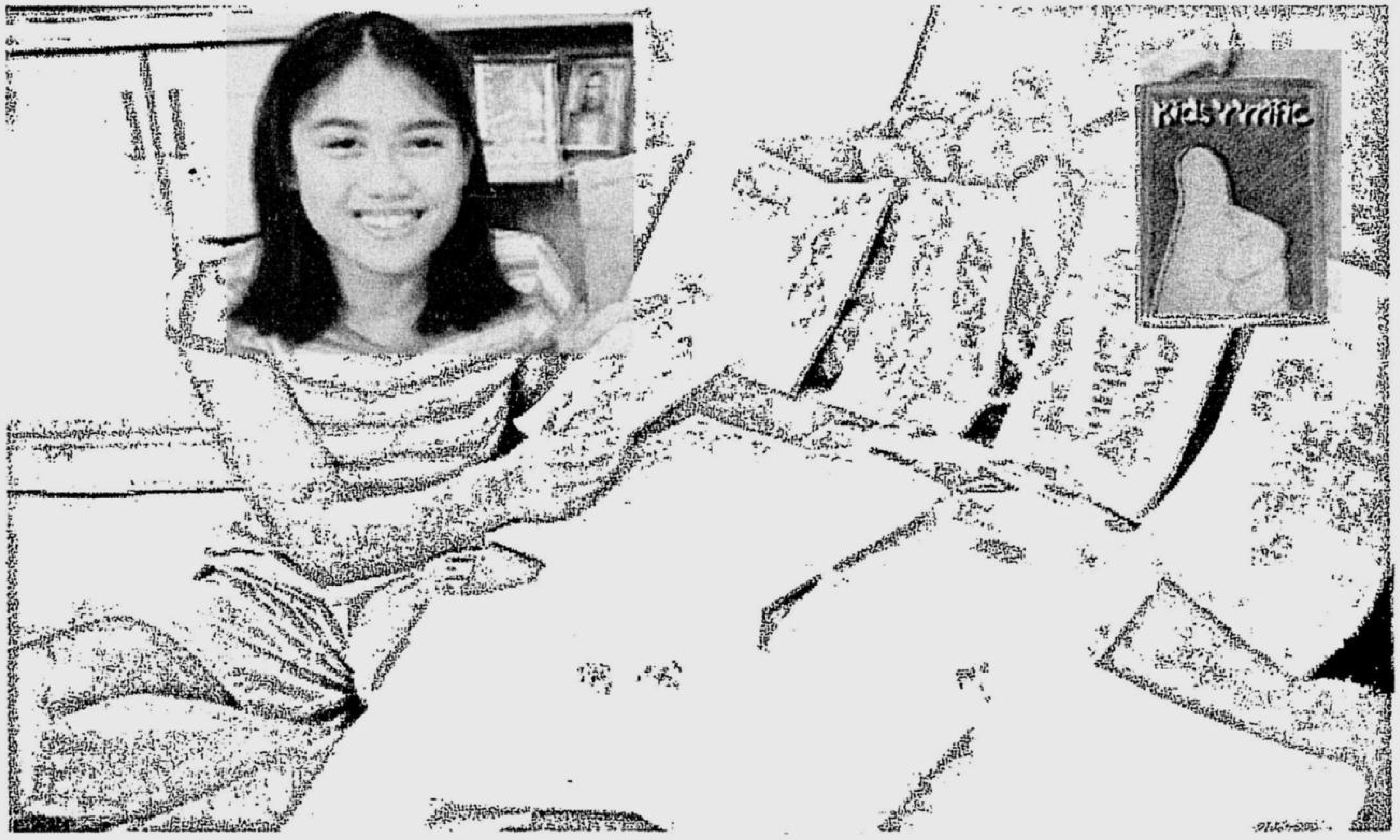


SIXTEEN issues and counting... Abish holds up a centerfold of character Aki. JOHNNY VILLENA

Abish's Abundant Characters

Meet this 13-year-old doodler and turn into a comic book character!

By Eline Santos

THIRTEEN-year-old Noela Abish Dagal creates comics with her real-life classmates and friends as characters in the story.

Abish created 10 issues, titled "Book Research Jam," for her Grade 6 class in Rich Golden Shower Montessori Center in Antipolo. She is currently making her 16th issue for her freshman class at the Francisco P. Felix Memorial National High School, also in Cainta.

Why the title? "Our group likes to research," Abish explains. No wonder she got third honors in school last year.

Dan is the leader of the group. Barbra is Abish's best friend. Pamela is the quiet, intelligent girl.

"I'm not sure how many characters I have now. Sometimes someone requests to be included in the comics."

Abish doesn't pencil in her work, she draws and writes in the dialogue directly with a pen. "I just leave it blank when I'm not sure what they're going to say yet." Her one and only original work is then lent out to classmates who eagerly await the next episode of their misadventures.

Making comics is something Abish shares with older sister Aubrey, who also has her own title called "Lost Atlantis." Aubrey and Abish won second and third place respectively in a create-your-own-character contest last December.

Anime influences Abish's style. Her favorites are "Detective Conan," "Dragonball Z" and "Samurai X."

Abish's dreams include "being a successful animator or cartoonist," so "I can be of help to my family."

Another dream is "to be a professional swimmer and have an international award like in the Olympics." To date, Abish has won silver and gold medals in the district meet of the Antipolo Private Schools Athletic Association.

She also wouldn't mind having her own comic book someday. She hopes this will be enjoyed not just by her schoolmates, but the whole country.

"Continue to do what you do and share your talents," Abish advises wannabe artists. "Also, don't forget to study."

R U 'RRIFIC?

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're 'Rriffic' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
Phil. Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces
cor. Yague & Mascardo Sts.
1231 Makati City

Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!

Kid 'r'rrific

nomination form

I nominate: ______________________
____

Age: ______________________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because: (Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____

She/he lives at ______________________
____
____

and studies at ______________________
____

Her/his contact number is: ______
____

Sender's Name: ______________________
____

Sender's Age & School: ______________________
____

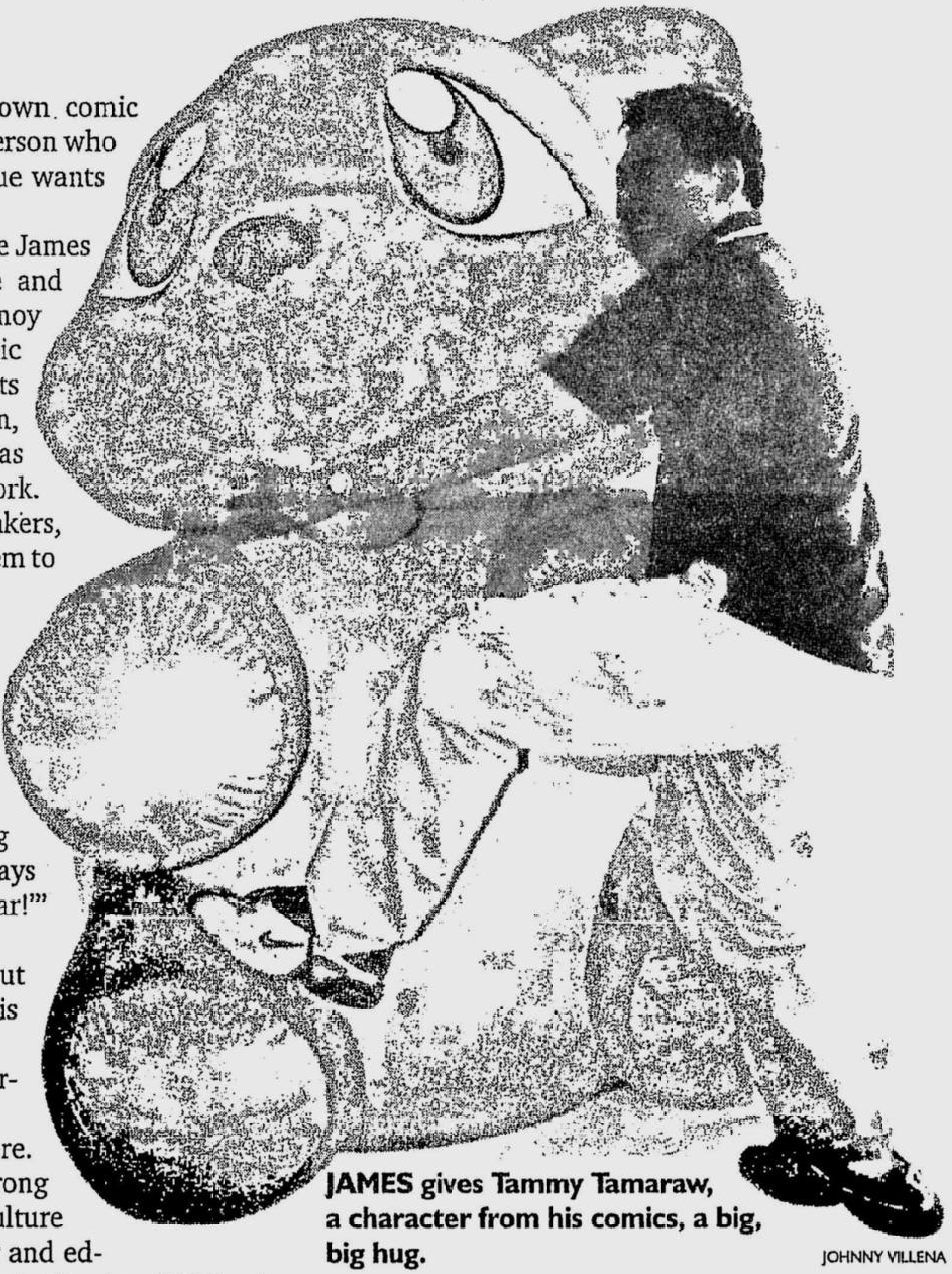
Sender's Address: ______________________
____

Sender's Contact No. ______________________
____

The Comics Man!

Jescie James Palabay wants lots of cool Pinoy comic books out there for kids to read

By Eline Santos



JAMES gives Tammy Tamaraw, a character from his comics, a big, big hug.

JOHNNY VILLENA

WANT to publish your own comic book someday? At least one person who has made his dream come true wants to help others do the same.

Together with friends, Jescie James Palabay organized an anime and comic book convention for Pinoy artists and their work. Comic book authors, artists, hobbyists and fans came to have fun, dress up as anime, share ideas and check out each other's work.

For aspiring comic book makers, James set aside a space for them to show off their work.

They're also called independent comic book makers which means they photocopy their artwork for others to buy at a very low price of P20.

"One of them was telling me, 'I made more in two days than I made in a whole year!'" James excitedly shares.

James used to joke about making comic books with his friends.

"*Sige*, let's do one tomorrow!"

Tomorrow is not only here. It's been two years going strong with popular Pinoy *manga* Culture Crash. James is the publisher and editor in chief of Culture Crash Comics (CCCom), which comes out roughly every two months.

He writes "One Day, Isang Diwa," a story about a high school student named Jun Morales and his friends. One of those friends is best buddy Diwa, a beautiful *duwende*.

One of CCCom's distinctive styles is the creators' cartoon version of themselves popping up to make side comments on a story. James makes his appearance as "Da Bhoss," his alter ego in a red cap.

The side comments the comic alter egos make really come from their meetings. "We sit in a circle and preview each other's work," James relates. "We all give comments and suggestions." And while he doesn't find it easy, James says, "as much as possible I give free rein to the creator."

James hopes there will be more wonderful comic books out there. Recently, they offered eight pages for fans to get their own story published in Culture Crash. That's a definite step closer to having your own comic book-making dream come true!

"We're trying our best to help everyone else grow because in the end, I think we will also benefit," says James.

Do you know a grown-up who

- is fun to be with
- has an exciting job
- keeps an amazing hobby
- is all of the above???

If you know a grown-up whom all kids will love, give him or her the stamp:

A.K.A. COOL

Just fill out the nomination form below and tell us why your fave grown-up is the absolute coolest. If your nominee is chosen, ***YOU'LL*** *get a free JI T-shirt! Now that's really cool.*

A.K.A. COOL
Is an adult known as cool!
They're the folks
In our own family
Or the people
we meet in school!

I nominate _______________.
He/She is ________ years old and is my _______________.
Here are five super solid reasons why I think you should write about him/her:
1)____________________;
2)____________________;
3)____________________;
4)____________________;
5)____________________;

My nominee lives a_______________________.
Give him/her a call at ________
or send him/her an e-mail at ____________________.
By the way, I'm ____________________.
I'm_________ years old.
My address is____________________.
You may call me at____________________.

¿Thinkathon?

WHO SAID THAT?

FROM the given choices, would you know who is credited with having first uttered each memorable quotation?

1. "Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned."
   ○ Jesus Christ
   ○ Gautama Buddha
   ○ Prophet Muhammad

2. "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."
   ○ Socrates
   ○ John Harvard
   ○ Malcolm X

3. "The hardest thing to understand in the world is the income tax."
   ○ Albert Einstein
   ○ Mahatma Gandhi
   ○ Oscar Wilde

4. "If you can dream it, you can do it."
   ○ Charles Lindbergh
   ○ Sigmund Freud
   ○ Walt Disney

5. "Eighty percent of success is showing up."
   ○ Frank Sinatra
   ○ Woody Allen
   ○ Oprah Winfrey

6. "When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us."
   ○ Helen Keller
   ○ Anne Frank
   ○ Mother Teresa

7. "Every great mistake has a halfway moment, a split second when it can be recalled and perhaps remedied."
   ○ Pearl S. Buck
   ○ Napoleon Bonaparte
   ○ Richard Nixon

8. "Let us make hay while the sun shines."
   ○ Thomas Edison
   ○ Miguel de Cervantes
   ○ Aesop

9. "In the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes."
   ○ Marilyn Monroe
   ○ Steven Spielberg
   ○ Andy Warhol

10. "I'd rather be right than President."
   ○ Henry Clay
   ○ Patrick Henry
   ○ Benjamin Franklin

11. "Those who have less in life should have more in law."
   ○ Manuel L. Quezon
   ○ Diosdado Macapagal
   ○ Ramon Magsaysay

12. "When in doubt, tell the truth."
   ○ Mark Twain
   ○ Voltaire
   ○ Larry King

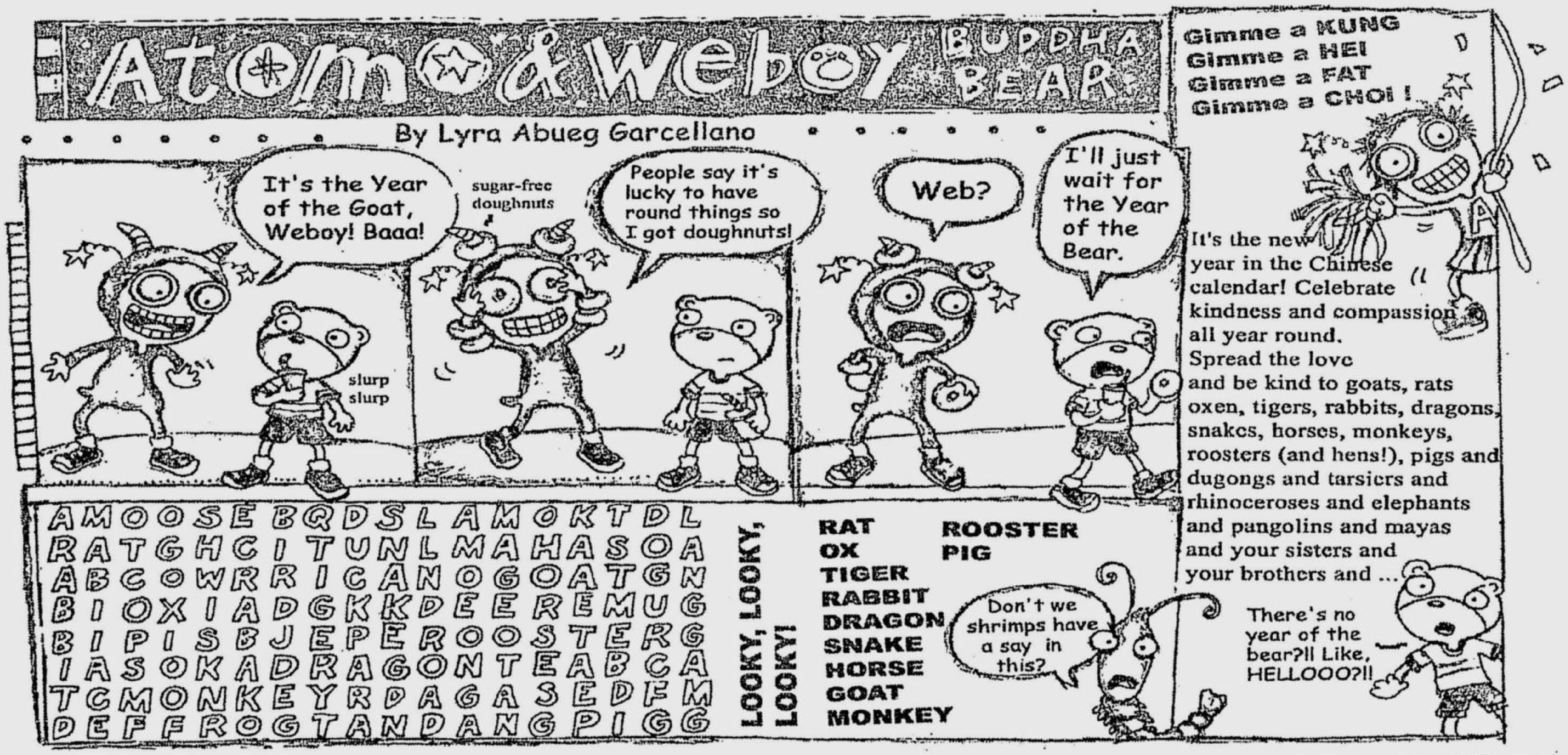
Answers:

1. Gautama Buddha
2. Malcolm X
3. Albert Einstein
4. Walt Disney
5. Woody Allen
6. Helen Keller
7. Pearl S. Buck
8. Miguel Cervantes
9. Andy Warhol
10. Henry Clay
11. Ramon Magsaysay
12. Mark Twain

Ratings:

superbrain!
excellent!
good!

11-12 9-10 7-8


Atom & Weboy
BUDDHA BEAR
By Lyra Abueg Garcellano
It's the Year of the Goat, Weboy! Baaa!
slurp slurp
sugar-free doughnuts
People say it's lucky to have round things so I got doughnuts!
Web?
I'll just wait for the Year of the Bear.
Gimme a KUNG
Gimme a HEI
Gimme a FAT
Gimme a CHOI!
There's no year of the bear?!! Like, HELLOOO?!!
Don't we shrimps have a say in this?

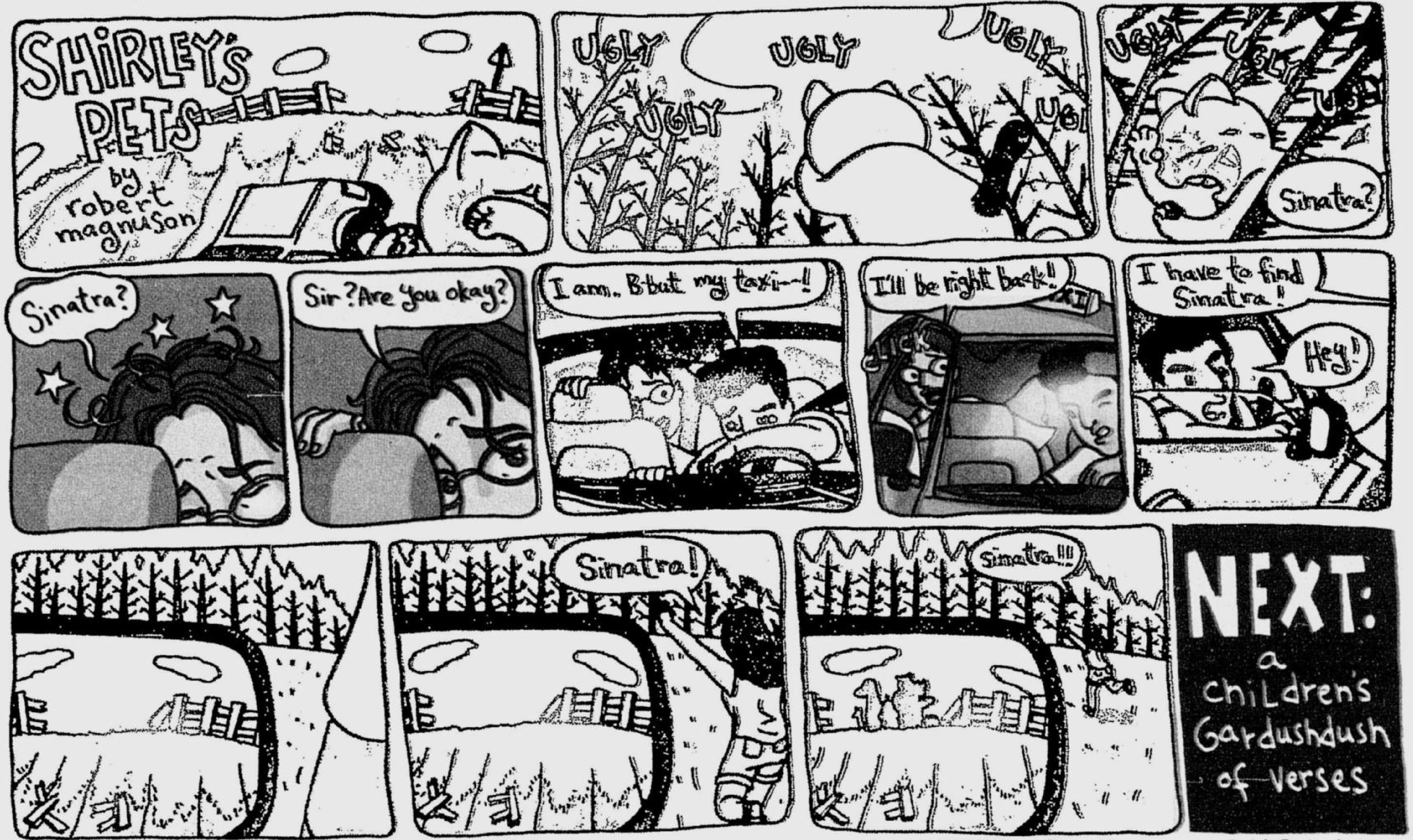
It's the new year in the Chinese calendar! Celebrate kindness and compassion all year round.
Spread the love
and be kind to goats, rats oxen, tigers, rabbits, dragons, snakes, horses, monkeys, roosters (and hens!), pigs and dugongs and tarsiers and rhinoceroses and elephants and pangolins and mayas and your sisters and your brothers and ...

A M O O S E B Q D S L A M O K T D L
R A T G H C I T U N L M A H A S O A
A B C O W R R I C A N O G O A T G N
B I O X I A D G K K D E E R E M U G
B I P I S B J E P E R O O S T E R G
I A S O K A D R A G O N T E A B C A
T C M O N K E Y R D A G A S E D F M
D E F F R O G T A N D A N G P I G G

LOOKY, LOOKY, LOOKY!

RAT
OX
TIGER
RABBIT
DRAGON
SNAKE
HORSE
GOAT
MONKEY
ROOSTER
PIG

Last Episode: Suffering from the half-invisibility effects of Little John's ring, Sinatra has unwittingly been given a painted face to replace the one that popped out of sight. As Shirley takes her to the Vet, Sinatra decides she can no longer live with her new appearance and takes matters into her own paws...


SHIRLEY'S PETS
by robert magnuson
UGLY
UGLY
UGLY
UGLY
UGL
UGLY
UGLY
UGL
Sinatra?
Sinatra?
Sir? Are you okay?
I am.. B-but my taxi--!
I'll be right back!
I have to find Sinatra!
Hey!
Sinatra!
Sinatra!!!
NEXT: a children's Gardushdush of verses

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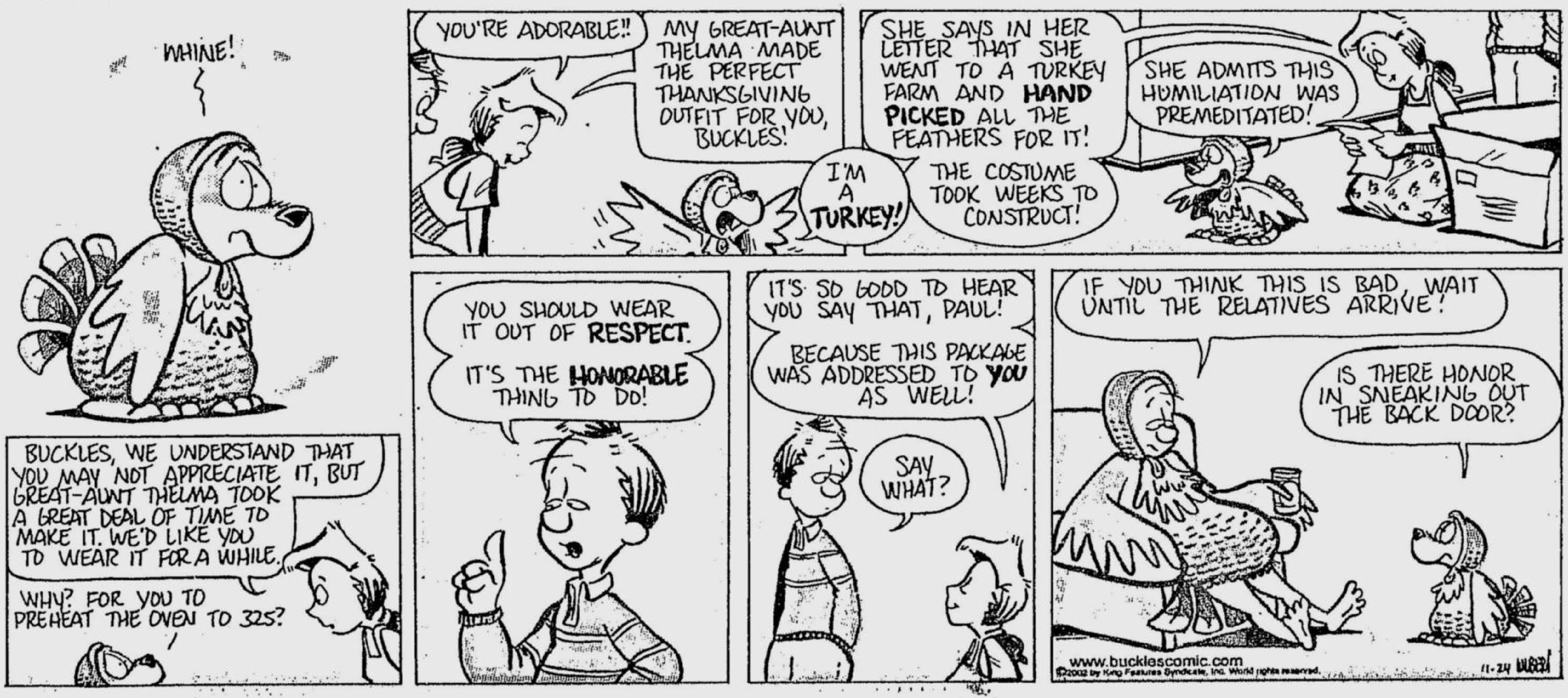
BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


WHINE!
BUCKLES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU MAY NOT APPRECIATE IT, BUT GREAT-AUNT THELMA TOOK A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TO MAKE IT. WE'D LIKE YOU TO WEAR IT FOR A WHILE.
WHY? FOR YOU TO PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 325?
YOU'RE ADORABLE!!
MY GREAT-AUNT THELMA MADE THE PERFECT THANKSGIVING OUTFIT FOR YOU, BUCKLES!
I'M A TURKEY!
SHE SAYS IN HER LETTER THAT SHE WENT TO A TURKEY FARM AND HAND PICKED ALL THE FEATHERS FOR IT!
THE COSTUME TOOK WEEKS TO CONSTRUCT!
SHE ADMITS THIS HUMILIATION WAS PREMEDITATED!
YOU SHOULD WEAR IT OUT OF RESPECT.
IT'S THE HONORABLE THING TO DO!
IT'S SO GOOD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, PAUL!
BECAUSE THIS PACKAGE WAS ADDRESSED TO YOU AS WELL!
SAY WHAT?
IF YOU THINK THIS IS BAD, WAIT UNTIL THE RELATIVES ARRIVE!
IS THERE HONOR IN SNEAKING OUT THE BACK DOOR?
www.bucklescomic.com
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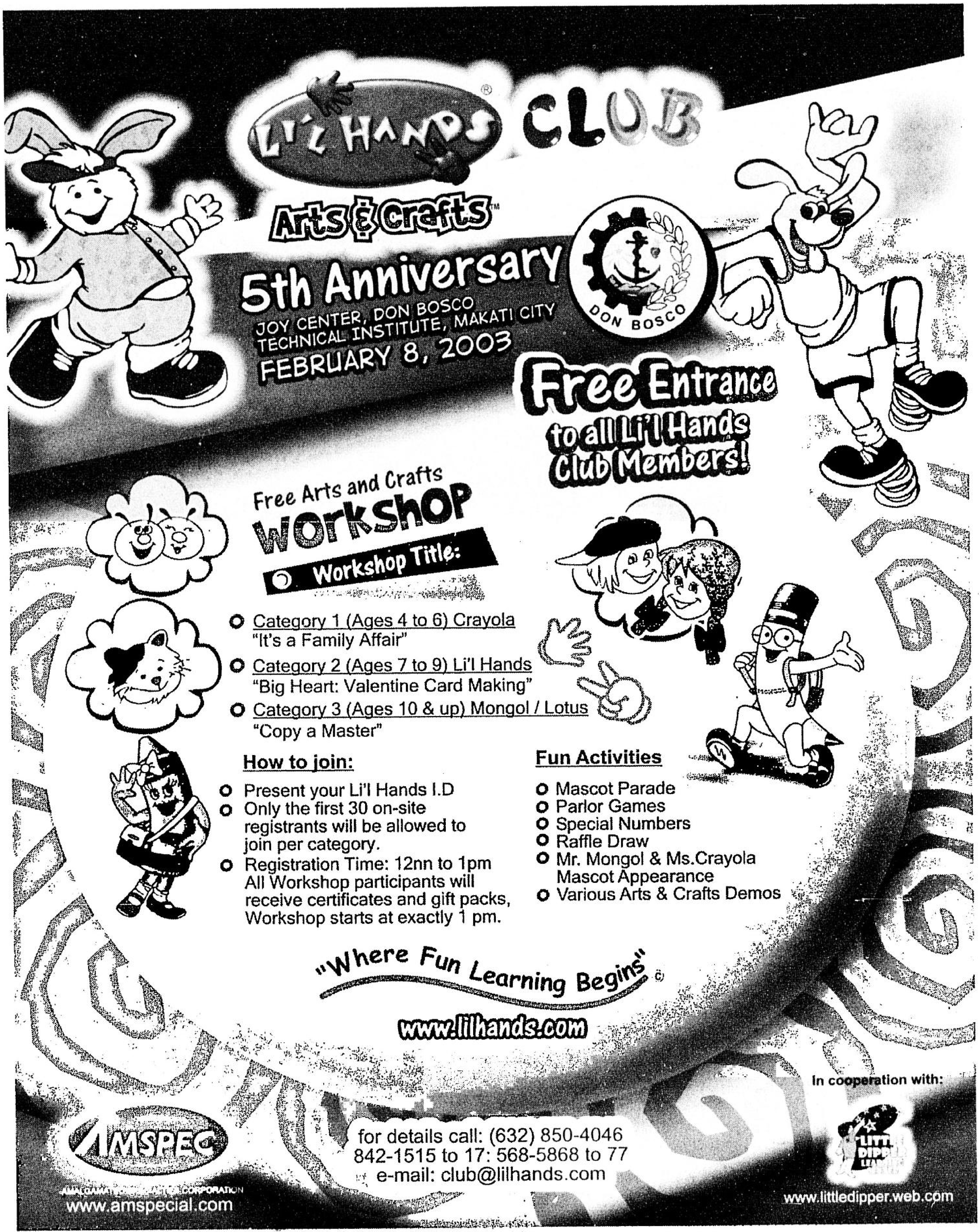
11-24 GILBERT

Out There

(from page 3)

perial treat, airs at 9 p.m.

DISCOVER CHINA. Discovery Channel celebrates the Lunar New Year with **"China Revealed,"** a week-long special on China's rich history and culture, airs from Monday, Feb. 3, through Friday, Feb. 7, from 10 to 11 p.m. On Monday, Feb. 3, **"Secrets of the Buried Armies"** takes viewers to the pits containing the terracotta soldiers that guard the tombs of the late Chinese emperors. On Tuesday, Feb. 4, get to know China's first emperor who came to the throne as King of Qin at the young age of 13 in **"Sphinx: Qin Shihuang."** On Wednesday, Feb. 5, follow the story of the Great Wall of China—from the emperors that had it built to the lonely life of the frontier guards who manned it. Then, check out some of the ancient Chinese inventions in a two-episode program on Feb. 6 and 7. Ever wonder what the world would have been without paper and printing? That would mean no JI! All programs encore the following days at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.



LI'L HANDS® CLUB
Arts & Crafts™
5th Anniversary
JOY CENTER, DON BOSCO TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MAKATI CITY
FEBRUARY 8, 2003
DON BOSCO

Free Entrance to all Li'l Hands Club Members!

Free Arts and Crafts WORKSHOP

○ Workshop Title:

- Category 1 (Ages 4 to 6) Crayola
  "It's a Family Affair"
- Category 2 (Ages 7 to 9) Li'l Hands
  "Big Heart: Valentine Card Making"
- Category 3 (Ages 10 & up) Mongol / Lotus
  "Copy a Master"

How to join:

- Present your Li'l Hands I.D
- Only the first 30 on-site registrants will be allowed to join per category.
- Registration Time: 12nn to 1pm All Workshop participants will receive certificates and gift packs, Workshop starts at exactly 1 pm.

Fun Activities

- Mascot Parade
- Parlor Games
- Special Numbers
- Raffle Draw
- Mr. Mongol & Ms.Crayola Mascot Appearance
- Various Arts & Crafts Demos

"Where Fun Learning Begins" ©

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